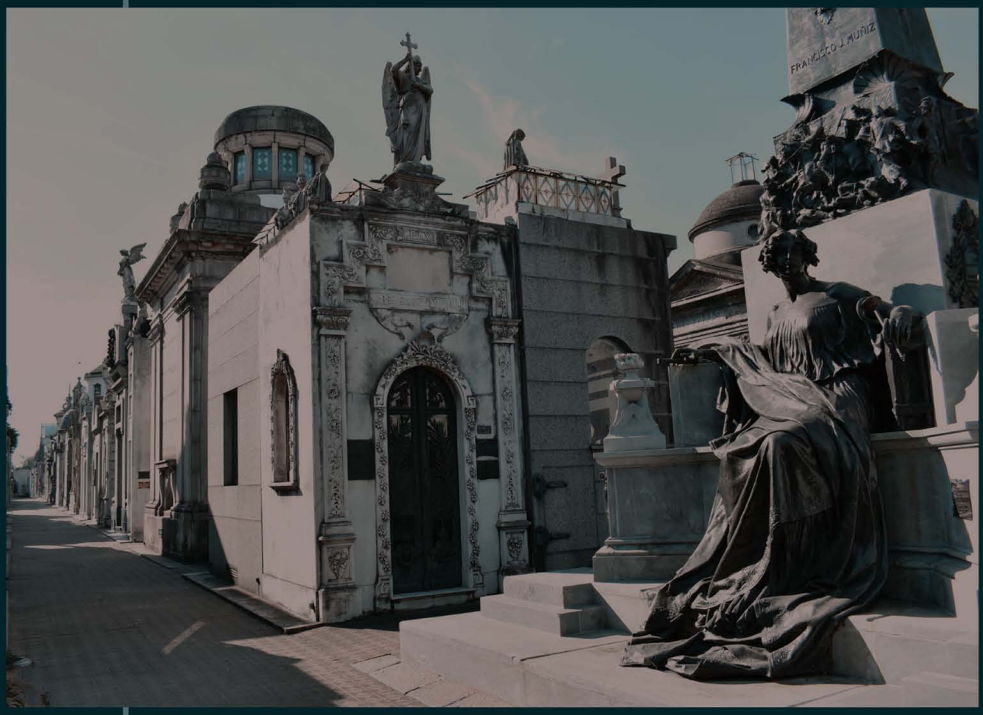

On the Nature of Marx's Things

Translation as Necrophilology

JACQUES LEZRA

foreword by VITTORIO MORFINO

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ON THE NATURE OF MARX'S THINGS

Translation as Necrophilology

Jacques Lezra

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Foreword: Encounter and Translation

Vittorio Morfino

In a book fragment written in 1982 and posthumously published with the title *The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter*, Louis Althusser attempts to define a form of materialism entirely different from that of the tradition, a form of materialism that would escape the classic opposition between idealism and materialism, an opposition completely internal to the history of Western metaphysics. Althusser suggests a materialism of the rain, of contingency, of the aleatory—a materialism not dominated by the Leibnizian principle *nihil est sine ratione*. In this fragment, which was to be part of a book dedicated to Karl Marx, but has become a sort of text in its own right, Althusser sketches "an almost completely unknown materialist tradition in the history of philosophy,"[1] a profound tradition

> that sought its materialist anchorage *in a philosophy of the encounter* . . . , whence this tradition's radical rejection of all philosophies of essence (*Ousia*, *Essentia*, *Wesen*), that is, of Reason (*Logos*, *Ratio*, *Vernuft*), and therefore of Origin and End—the Origin being nothing more, here, than the anticipation of the End in Reason or primordial order (that is, the anticipation of Order, whether it be rational, moral, religious or aesthetic)—in the interests of a philosophy which, rejecting the Whole and every Order, rejects the Whole and order *in favor* of dispersion (Derrida would say, in his terminology, "dissemination") and *disorder*.[2]

The title of this fragment is the result of an inspired intuition by its editor, François Matheron, but the expression is Althusserian, as it is Althusser who speaks of an "underground current of the materialism of the encounter and its repression by a (philosophical) materialism of essence."[3] This is the case because the mark of this materialism is to have been combatted, removed, and covered over by the unprecedented character of its own discovery. It has been "buried in impenetrable darkness," to borrow Althusser's remark about Baruch Spinoza in "The Object of *Capital*."[4]

Tracing this tradition in a few inspired and dazzling pages (in the sense in which he himself claimed that the *Theses on Feuerbach* dazzles rather than illuminates), Althusser conjures the authors who would be its principal witnesses: Epicurus, Lucretius, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Spinoza, Jean-Jacques

Rousseau, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida. As for Marx? He turns out to be more what is at stake in the construction of this "current" than one of the authors who belongs to it. Or better: the sketch of the current, and this is particularly evident in the pages dedicated to it in *The Future Lasts Forever*, presents us with Althusser's way of accessing Marx, the authors from whom Althusser retrieved the conceptual instruments that allowed him to forge his own reading of Marx. And yet "the underground current" cannot be reduced to this: Althusser explicitly says that this current is "important in Marx," to the point that an opposition can be traced in his thought between a teleological and an aleatory mode of production: "The first goes back to Friedrich Engels's *Condition of the Working-Class in England*; its real inventor was Engels. It recurs in the famous chapter on primitive accumulation, the working day, and so on, and in a host of minor allusions, to which I shall return, if possible. The second is found in the great passages of *Capital* on the essence of capitalism, as well as the essence of the feudal and socialist modes of production, in the 'theory' of the transition, or form of passage, from one mode of production to another."[5] The authors of the "underground current" furnished Althusser with the conceptual instruments for recognizing in Marx that materialism of the encounter that is nevertheless present in Marx precisely because these authors were important in the establishment of his theory.

It remains to be asked whether Althusser's sketch has any historiographical value, whether it indicates the path for a historical reconstruction of "another" materialism. On this level the metaphor of the "current" proves to be completely inadequate, even assuming that it could be adequate on the level of Althusser's autobiography or Marx's biography. The metaphor of the current suggests a linear and continuous flowing of time, in which, as the adjective "underground" implies, a continuity exists that is not visible on the surface. In order to think the question of the underground current from a historiographical point of view, it is necessary to turn to the section "An Outline for a Concept of Historical Time" in "The Object of *Capital*." This section allows us to think, subsequent to the metaphor of the current, the complexity, plurality, and articulation of different social times. This opens up extraordinary historiographical perspectives, beyond those raised in Althusser's pages, on the way Lucretius's thought constitutes a relevant element in Machiavelli's thought, or even the way Lucretius and Machiavelli significantly enter in the construction of Spinoza's thought, and so on. Not linear determination, not the transfer of a testimony always already concealed in the purity of an origin, but a multiple and complex determination, an element of a strategy of thought within a conflictual political and theoretical conjuncture.

It is under this horizon that Jacques Lezra's *On the Nature of Marx's Things: Translation as Necrophilology* reveals its far-reaching importance on the double level that characterizes it: historiographical excavation and an intervention into the current conjuncture against a materialism of essence, that is, a materialism that would aim to establish the primacy of the "thing," the "object," or "matter." The two exercises naturally come to form a whole in Lezra's textual strategy, in his attempt to think a materialism that is by no means limited to restaging the Althusserian insights of the materialism of the encounter, instead developing them in an original direction. If at the heart of Althusserian materialism there is the concept of the encounter as the fundamental theoretical weapon for dismantling the concept of essence, at the heart of Lezra's wild materialism (to borrow a wonderful expression from the title of his earlier book) is the concept of "translation": translation is what allows him to dismantle identity—the identity of things, objects, materials, and disciplines. Lezra writes:

> "translation" is not a concept whose object can be strictly or rigidly determined; its borders cannot be fixed; it is not, under any aspect, identical with itself—even in the strong Hegelian sense in which "translation's" identity with itself might be imagined as the identity of identity and nonidentity. Translation operates excessively and insufficiently at once, without there being any clear way of discriminating which is which, or of deciding which of the two might produce what one would call a successful, or a better, translation, or even something that counts *as a translation*. (Introduction)

In order to press the analogy between Althusser's concept of "encounter" and Lezra's concept of "translation" all the way, it is necessary to emphasize that for Althusser, every encounter is contingent both in the sense that it could not have taken place and that it could disperse. Above all, every encounter is never simple; every encounter is an encounter of encounters, or, to use one of Althusser's 1960s categories, every encounter is overdetermined. Lezra transfers all of the power of the Althusserian encounter into his conception of translation: translation is never simple, and in every translation a multiplicity of mediations come into play, without which these mediations would be guaranteed by a *telos*. They would be, as they are in G. W. F. Hegel, the signposts along a path. Translation is at once a political and theoretical gesture. It is a strategy that can open ways of reading one text and losing others.

It is neither possible nor useful to summarize in a few pages the routes Lezra proposes in this book, a book that infringes upon the disciplinary camps of philosophy, literature, psychoanalysis, and political theory. It is not possible because the entire value of Lezra's endeavor lies not in presenting us with theses but, rather, in making them emerge from the play of texts,

always taken in the fragment of their materiality with acute precision. In this way, the fundamental questions that stand at the heart of this book—matter, the critique of political economy, universalism, citizenship, exile—are never confronted by means of all-encompassing definitions but by departing from a fragment: Marx's fourth notebook, dedicated to Lucretius; a passage in the 1857 introduction, a passage from "Bartleby, the Scrivener," a celebrated Freudian phrase, a comment of Edward Said's about Theodor Adorno, or a definition by Quentin Meillassoux. Departing from the materiality of the fragment, Lezra develops a complex strategy that, to simplify in the extreme, we can say moves in two quite distinct directions. The first movement is the traditional one of an excavation of sources, which Lezra carries out with great virtuosity. This excavation, however, is never at the service of a conception of tradition as the eternal repetition of the same, and sources for Lezra play the role of elements, or better, forces, which allow the complex strategy of the text to be penetrable, not returning to a pacified origin but, rather, to the moment of intervention into a political and theoretical relation of forces. The second movement, Althusserian par excellence, is that of *détour*, the passage over one thought in order to see clearly in another. And yet even here Lezra operates on the materiality of the fragment, traversing the materiality of another text or another language in order to see clearly in it, a clear sight that is never a reduction to a "thing" or "object" in its purity, precisely because it is never given except in mediations, in translations. An example of these two movements comes in Chapter 4, when Lezra, after showing a dialogue between the king and inquisitor in Friedrich Schiller's *Don Carlos* as an unexpected source for Sigmund Freud's famous proposition *wo Es war, soll Ich werden*, first reconstructs Schiller's presence in Freud and Freud's circle, and then proposes a *détour* through Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlos*, which Freud did not know. From the difference between the two texts, from the two fragments of text taken in their linguistic materiality, Lezra allows to emerge the ambivalence of the link between theology and politics, *trait d'union* and *trait de division*.

However, in order to show Lezra's methodology with an example, it seems emblematic to examine the work carried out in Chapter 2 on a famous passage from the 1857 introduction, where Marx, taking distance from the disciplinary field of political economy, interrupts his own text with a proposition from Spinoza. Surely the claim that Spinoza could have a pivotal role in the foundation (or refoundation) of Marxism is not a new idea in its history: from the late Engels to Giorgi Plekhanov and Antonio Labriola at the end of the nineteenth century, and from Evald Ilyenkov to Toni Negri and Althusser in the latter half of the twentieth century, the idea has been

repurposed with different and sometimes opposing intentions. Lezra's point of departure is entirely different, in that he does not begin from the totality of the two systems in order to extract general conclusions but, rather, from the materiality of Marx's language.

At the moment Marx rejects the Robinsonades of political economy, where does he position his discourse? Here is Lezra's response:

> *Capital* produces dynamic conceptual objects unsuitable to the order and to the time of *any* decision-system or discipline—including the decision-systems that *Capital* itself produces. . . . How, outside the same grander and encompassing theological machines—under the aspect of eternity, or in time to the deadly repetition of mathematics—could I make such an argument? Only establishing an analytic contradiction between the dynamics of "unsuitable" objects that Marx's *Capital* produces and the concepts of decision-machine and of discipline, and between the historicity of such unsuitable objects and that offered by *Capital* and by capital, will suit. (Chapter 2)

The concepts of *Capital* do not correspond to things but are dynamic conceptual objects, concepts unsuited to the disciplinary order produced by political economy, or by the modern academic-disciplinary field. Yet this conclusion is not apodictic but produced through the analysis of a fragment, precisely that fragment of Marx's preface where in order to show the identity of production and consumption, Spinoza's famous proposition *determinatio est negatio* breaks into the text:

> Note the three sorts of identity that run together in Marx's famous text, at obviously different levels of analysis: the identity of production and consumption in the portmanteau concept that classical economics calls, *nennt*, "productive consumption"; the identity of determination and negation; and—most mysteriously—the identity on which the relation between those two hangs. The first *kommt hinaus auf* the second, Marx writes, reticently: these two forms of identity "amount to" each other, they "come to about the same"—one usually says *das kommt auf dasselbe hinaus* or *auf eins* or *aufs Gleiche*. (The French translation, by Maximilien Rubel and Louis Evrard, reads "revient à"). The identity that mediates and determines the relation, the *hinauskommen* of the first two; the identity apparently allowing these two forms of identity to be translated into one another: that of a certain "Spinoza." (Chapter 2)

Lezra shows how what is at stake in Marx's passage is precisely the concept of identity produced by political economy, a concept of disciplinary identity that *Capital* does not substitute with another: Marx does not produce a disciplinary identity because the system of *Capital* is precisely a "translating

machine." In between the two Marxian formulas that establish the identity between production and consumption, between *identisch* and *zusammenfallend*, Lezra grasps the symptom of this difference, where the term *zusammenfallen* allows a "subterranean Lucretian strand" of Marx's thought to emerge. But more than that, it is Spinoza's name that marks the difference of Marx's discourse from political economy:

> *Capital* . . . is not only a critique of political economy: it is an effort to articulate a concept of system, and hence a concept of systemic or systematic identity, that is not based in the reflexive, mutually constituting relation between instance and class. "Spinoza's phrase," inasmuch as it is *Spinoza*'s phrase, inasmuch as the phrase is attached necessarily to *a* proper name, to *this* proper name, and inasmuch as it is also a common enough noun, a common enough property to circulate namelessly as a coin in the conceptual economy of the mid–nineteenth century, provides Marx with the discursive register, with the defective concept of system and the correspondingly defective system of concepts, that will form the base of this articulation. (Chapter 2)

Certainly, Lezra rightly points out a series of places where both Marx and Engels utilized Spinoza's proposition, surely mediated through Hegel's *Science of Logic* (a problem to which Pierre Macherey dedicated an entire chapter in his magnificent *Hegel or Spinoza*) and probably Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn* as well as Ludwig Feuerbach's *History of Modern Philosophy*. The proposition occurs in Spinoza's Letter 50, a Latin translation of an original Dutch letter that has been lost. What surprises us, however, is the reconstruction of the meaning of the very name "Spinoza" within Marx's strategy, the appearance of the very name "Spinoza" precisely where political economy as a discipline is put into question. In order to carry this out, Lezra yet again does the work of excavation, showing how the name "Spinoza" itself functions, in the philosophy and literature that Marx knew, precisely as a "wounded defective identity":

> We now have the beginnings of answers to the questions that Marx poses in these introductory, primitive, Edenic scenes of the "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy": what sort of object is the name "Spinoza"; *how* is it produced, and in what way might the analysis of its production help us to understand Marx's critique of the discipline of political economy? What, then, might be the alternatives to political economy, and to the conceptualization of disciplinarity and objectuality attached to it, that *Capital* will eventually propose for producing objects like "Spinoza," deciding on their status, sorting and relat-

> ing them, and making them effective? What system of concepts is Marx building upon the work of the proper name "Spinoza," and upon the incoherent or cryptic sense of identity that name bears with it? Is it indeed a system, and if so, how is it organized, how are its elements or objects produced, identified, and brought, through second-order objects, into relation with one another? *Spinozas Satz* is not a phrase in a *discipline*, in the sense on which we opened, inasmuch as the cryptic identities it turns on are radically different from the three-part, autopoetic topology advanced by systems theorists. (Chapter 2)

In other words, Spinoza is for Marx the name of an impossible disciplinary identity opposed to that of political economy. Not only this, but in the measure in which the name "Spinoza" itself was historically identified with the phenomenon of marranism, it is also the name of a cryptic identity, of a strategy of translation that constitutes, according to Lezra, the heart of the Marxian alternative to classical economics: "I say that *marrano* designates an 'obscure' identity, obscurely shared by Spinoza and Marx, because what *marrano* names is not an identity we can understand in the way in which we would understand the identity subtending logical propositions like *determinatio est negatio* . . . or an ethnic, religious, or national identity one might be said to possess at one time or another time. (A Jew is a Jew, in Spain in 1492; in Amsterdam in 1675; or in London in 1857.)" (Chapter 2). This type of identity pertains to those dynamic objects that no materialism of essence will ever be able to completely catalog, precisely because these objects are constitutively not able to be cataloged from the fields of academic disciplines. They can only be seized in the *zwischen*, among the materiality of languages, in the materiality of relations of force and the conflict, through that movement of translation, *without origin or end*, that constitutes the heart of the work of thought according to Lezra, but also the nature itself of Marx's "thing" and the underground current that animates, ever anew, the challenge to dominant knowledge.

ON THE NATURE OF MARX'S THINGS

Introduction

But the long, contemplative look . . . that fully discloses people and things [*Dinge*], is always the one in which the urge towards the object is broken, reflected [der, in dem der Drang zum Objekt gebrochen, reflektiert ist]. . . . Non-violent reflection [*Betrachtung*], from which all happiness of the truth comes, has this condition, that those who reflect do not incorporate the object into themselves: nearness by distance.

—T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

H.—*True*, as we now write it; or, *Trew*, as it was formerly written; means simply and merely—That which is *Trowed*. And, instead of its being a rare commodity upon earth; except only in words, there is nothing but *Truth* in the world. . . . But *Truth* supposes mankind: for whom and by whom alone the word is formed, and to whom only it is applicable. If no man, no *Truth* . . .

F.—If *Trowed* be the single meaning of the term *True*, I agree that these and many other consequences will follow: for there can be nothing *Trowed*; unless there are persons *Trowing*. And men may *Trow* differently. And there are reasons enough in this world, why every man should not always know what every other man thinks. But are the corresponding and the equivalent words in other languages resolvable in the same manner as *True*? Does the Latin *Verum* also mean *Trowed*?

H.—It means nothing else. *Res*, a thing, gives us *Reor*, i. e. I am *Thing-ed*: *Ve-reor*, I am strongly *Thing-ed* . . .

F.—I am *Thinged*! Who ever used such language before? Why, this is worse than *Reor*, which Quinctilian (lib. 8. cap. 3.) calls a Horrid word. *Reor*, however, is a deponent, and means *I think*.

H.—And do you imagine there ever was such a thing as a deponent verb; except for the purpose of translation, or of concealing our ignorance of the original meaning of the verb? . . . You do not call *Think* a deponent. And yet it is as much a deponent as *Reor*. Remember, where we now say *I Think*, the antient expression was—*Me thinketh*, i. e. *Me Thingeth*, *It Thingeth me*.

—John Horne Tooke, *Epea Pteroenta; or, The Diversions of Purley*, 1798

I

Here are two good stories. The first one is recent. When it's told by "*The world's local bank,*" the British firm HSBC, the story concerns the famous "Different Values" advertising campaign that the Madison Avenue company J.W. Thompson devised for HSBC in 2004: "The company's belief," one of HSBC's websites put it in 2007, is "that difference creates value."[1] The "differences" that the Thompson campaign puts on display in countless airports, for numberless traveling eyes to see, are legion—differences of taste, use, conventional appreciation, age. And of meaning, of course. HSBC's description of the "Different Values" campaign in their statement and the rebarbative lemmas that moralize the images in causeway after causeway play on the different senses of "value" (moral, economic). Like the sense of words, objects and images attach to contradictory descriptions—"good," "bad," "wise," "old." A white woman holding a child while three slightly older children play rambunctiously in the background is marked now with "privilege," now with "sacrifice," and finally with "role model." A bicycle leaned up against a white wall stenciled with red Chinese characters is "ecology," "equality," and "independence." Single terms attach to varying objects—the word "devotion" to a hand sponging an antique car's chromed fin to a shine; to an elderly couple's hands, clasped; to a young woman planting a sapling in a parched landscape.

The point is not to sell the particular object or experience. (Think of the standard analogue from Saussurean linguistics: no more is the linguistic value of an expression or—more basically still—of a phoneme given in the unit of a minimal pair, just **ba* or just **be*; just the signifier "*juste*" without the signified "*juste*.") The point is, rather, to translate the notion "difference" from a semantic domain in which it serves to *produce* "value" and "values" *to* a semantic domain in which "difference" can itself become value and a value—where, branded as the universal and sovereign mediator, "difference" can itself circulate, be copyrighted, be protected, be traded. We might have in mind, for instance, the difference between what belongs to the "world" and what is "local," between "good" and "bad," "equality" and "independence"; between moral "value" and economic "value"; or between an older couple and a young woman. So the phrase "difference creates value" expresses a story about the way value accrues to certain objects, and is itself also an example of just that process: it bears a "value" it serves to create. The value of the phrase, and of the story it tells, in and for the age of global capital, in and for HSBC—one of the financial motors of global capital—is to translate difference *into* value: to produce it as an objective commodity circulating

among others, and no different as a bearer of value from a bicycle or the image of a bicycle, or "equality," or "privilege."

The second story is already entirely naturalized, hackneyed even, when Karl Marx tells it in 1867. (Or when his English translators Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling tell it, slightly differently, in 1887.) "The blacksmith forges," Marx writes in the standard English translation of *Capital,* "and the product is a forging."[2] On this peg—solidly anchored, tautologous: wouldn't anything forged necessarily be a forging? Isn't a blacksmith the worker who labors at the forge?—hangs a chain that leads from what we forge or spin, base and plastic matter, to today's firmaments: the internet of things, immaterial commodities, information products, financial instruments, tertiary markets. Of course we take our identities from this long story as well, identities recognizable and readily tradable in ancillary sociocultural markets. In 1958 Hannah Arendt gave the human animal in industrial societies the global name *homo faber*: the maker of things, and in particular the maker of tools, technical or instrumental devices for bending the world to our needs. She had in mind a human animal fashioned to this end; like Marx, she imagined as both product and means of production the story that leads from the primal scene of production ("The blacksmith forges and the product is a forging") to its vastly elaborated industrial and postindustrial sequels.

The point of this second story—as Marx (or his translators) and Arendt tell it—is to confirm the sovereign solidity of the identities and subjectivities fashioned for *homo faber* by his fabrication. The story needs telling and retelling, translating and retranslating, as fashion and the means of fashioning change, as markets and commodity-values and forms of ascribing value to commodities shift. The systems of translation that link the making of things, the making of identities, and the making of stories relating the one to the other have subtle and changing links, intensities, uses, and consistencies that differ vastly from time to time, language and place. For instance—something happens in the twenty-year period between the publication of *Das Kapital* in Hamburg and the publication, in English, of Moore and Aveling's translation. Recall the story's expanded version, in the English of 1887: "In the labour-process . . . man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the commencement, in the material worked upon. The process disappears in the product; the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man. Labour has incorporated itself with its subject: the former is materialised, the latter transformed. That which in the labourer appeared as movement, now appears in the product as a fixed quality without motion. The blacksmith forges and the product is a forging." Marx had concluded something rather

different. Here is Fowkes's more recent, more literal translation, with the 1867 German:

> The product of the process is a use-value, a piece of natural material adapted to human needs by means of a change in its form. [*Sein Produkt ist ein Gebrauchswerth, ein durch Form-veränderung menschlichen Bedürfnissen assimilirter Naturstoff.*] Labour has become bound up in its object: labour has been objectified [*vergegenständlicht*], the object has been worked on [*verarbeitet*]. What on the side of the worker appeared in the form of unrest now appears, on the side of the product, in the form of being, as a fixed, immobile characteristic. The worker has spun, and the product is a spinning.[3]
>
> (Durch den Prozess hat sich die Arbeit mit ihrem Gegenstand verbunden. Die Arbeit ist vergegenständlicht und der Gegenstand ist verarbeitet. Was auf Seiten des Arbeiters in der Form der Unruhe erschien, erscheint nun als ruhende Eigenschaft, in der Form des Seins, auf Seiten des Produkts. Er hat gesponnen und das Produkt ist ein Gespinnst.)

The work the translators do when they turn *Das Kapital* into the 1887 *Capital* involves transforming *binden,* "to bind," into "incorporation"; *Gegenstand*, "object," into "subject"; *Unruhe*, "unrest" or "disquiet," into "movement." And of course translating a spinner or a weaver, or at any rate a subject, "Er," who labors at spinning, into a "blacksmith." None of these transformations is trivial. Consider for instance what Moore and Aveling's 1887 translation achieves when it transforms spinning into blacksmithing—not just transforming one trade into another, and in consequence one identity into another. A world of standard representations of female labor, of *Spinnfrauen, Spinnerfrauen, Spinnerweibe*, the world of the *netrix, fila ducens,* the *femina che fila ò filatrice,* is unspun; the old connection, also remarked by Grimm's *Wörterbuch,* between *Gespinn* and the mother's milk, *Müttermilch,* is erased; the passage's connection to the Hargreaves mechanical spinning-Jenny, and to Marx's many different returns to the machine, is lost; through it, the silken threads are cut that lead to both the Jennies in Marx's life, his wife and daughter; the pervasive connection that Marx draws, as early as *The German Ideology,* between fantasy or false argumentation and the *spinning* of tales is silenced. Shorn of spinning, Marx is not Marx; a worker is not a machine, and a machine is not a woman, nor is a woman a machine (a nourishing mother, a wife, a child: Marx's version of the triad that Sigmund Freud would treat in his essay on "The Theme of the Three Caskets"); the work produced is not gossamer fantasy or mere spinster's tales.

None of these transformations—of identity and of philosophical and rhetorical register—is trivial, but just what does it mean that Moore and Aveling's 1887 translation gets these things, and just these, wrong? What does it mean for the future that Marx's work would have among English readers? What sort of object does capital—and *Kapital*—become, in this version of *Capital*?

As I write these words today, my first story, the story of capital's universally capturing function and of the inscription of difference into the field of objects that bear value is universally translated into the second, the reflexive story that offers consuming subjects identities that correspond to a mythical scene of production—and vice versa. Our difference from the objects we consume and produce, whether material or immaterial objects, is itself captured in commodity culture: it produces value, and the consumption *of* that value becomes, tendentially, the ground of global capital's moral economy. This machinic translation between stories captures and subjectivizes us. To furnish anything like an alternative to neoliberal capitalism's structural inequity and to the tools that fashion and guarantee it—debt traps, austerity programs, the marketization of risk; ideologies; the pedagogical, professional, legal, even familial institutions that produce and reproduce inequities today—we must first show the infelicities, the costs, and the violence on which the translation between these two stories depends.

On the Nature of Marx's Things seeks to draw the story of capital's capture of difference away from the story of capital's production of subjectivity. To this degree the project is a *critical* one. It also provides dynamic and defective concepts that gather together and serve to think and modify or displace the catastrophes of capital. To this degree it is an explicitly *political* project.

I take Marx and his closest readers to have had this critical-political project in all its radicality in mind as well: an account of wild mediation with every bit of edge ground into it. Because it does not sit well with mechanisms of capture, of value-production, of universal translation, of disciplinarization; with mechanisms that link, however dialectically, the "world" with the "local"; this project has remained a peripheral, contested, mostly unrecognized aspect of the Marxian tradition. (It does not seem accidental that Louis Althusser chose not to publish, indeed kept hidden, the works in which he addressed the critical political consequences of Marx's aleatory materialism.) Indeed, I would say—perhaps too baldly, and certainly with no argument to support me at this introductory stage—that what has come to be called the Marxian tradition takes shape around a long series of disavowals of Marx's critical political project.

What's a Thing When It's at Home?

Let's begin again.

Say we want to sharpen the edge of the contradiction that we hear sound in the differences between the Greek *krino-, krinein,* to cut apart and separate; and whatever it is that is *political* inasmuch as it tends toward a civil space in which separateness is conjugated: the polis. We'll need slightly different tools than those we use to describe the sorts of things we will imagine critico-political subjects to be. We will need to look in odd places for familiar problems, and in familiar places for the traces of problems the tradition has taught us not to read. We'll need other devices than the ones we've used to produce objects of thought, and from which we've taken our names. We'll need to take a different sort of thing as the subject of inquiry than has been typical of Marx's orthodox readers.

Say we ask: what are *things* for Marx and in Marx's work? We first approach matters from a point that lies just outside of Marx's work. We're in London; it's the very middle of the nineteenth century. Here are the words of Esther Summerson, the insufferable narrator of a part of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House.*[4] She descends the stairs surrounded by a small cloud of Jellyby children, sometime between March 1852 and September 1853, when the novel is serialized. Her smarmy masochism has always given me pause:

> I proposed to the children that they should come in and be very good at my table, and I would tell them the story of Little Red Riding Hood while I dressed; which they did, and were as quiet as mice, including Peepy, who awoke opportunely before the appearance of the wolf. When we went downstairs we found a mug with "A Present from Tunbridge Wells" on it lighted up in the staircase window with a floating wick, and a young woman, with a swelled face bound up in a flannel bandage blowing the fire of the drawing-room (now connected by an open door with Mrs. Jellyby's room) and choking dreadfully.[5]

Consider what Esther Summerson finds in the staircase window: the mug repurposed as a lamp, a present from the Kentish town of Tunbridge Wells. What *sort* of thing is it? What values does it have or acquire in the novel, for readers of the novel, for the form of the work? What does it mean to "consider" an object or to "reflect"—*betrachten* is Theodor Adorno's verb—upon it—to articulate a statement about this or that thing (a "thing" that might itself *be* a statement, for instance, the statement "Consider what Esther Summerson finds in the staircase window")? How do such objects circulate? (If indeed either the little reused thing on the windowsill, or a sentence I write about it, or a statement I make in "considering" that sentence, can

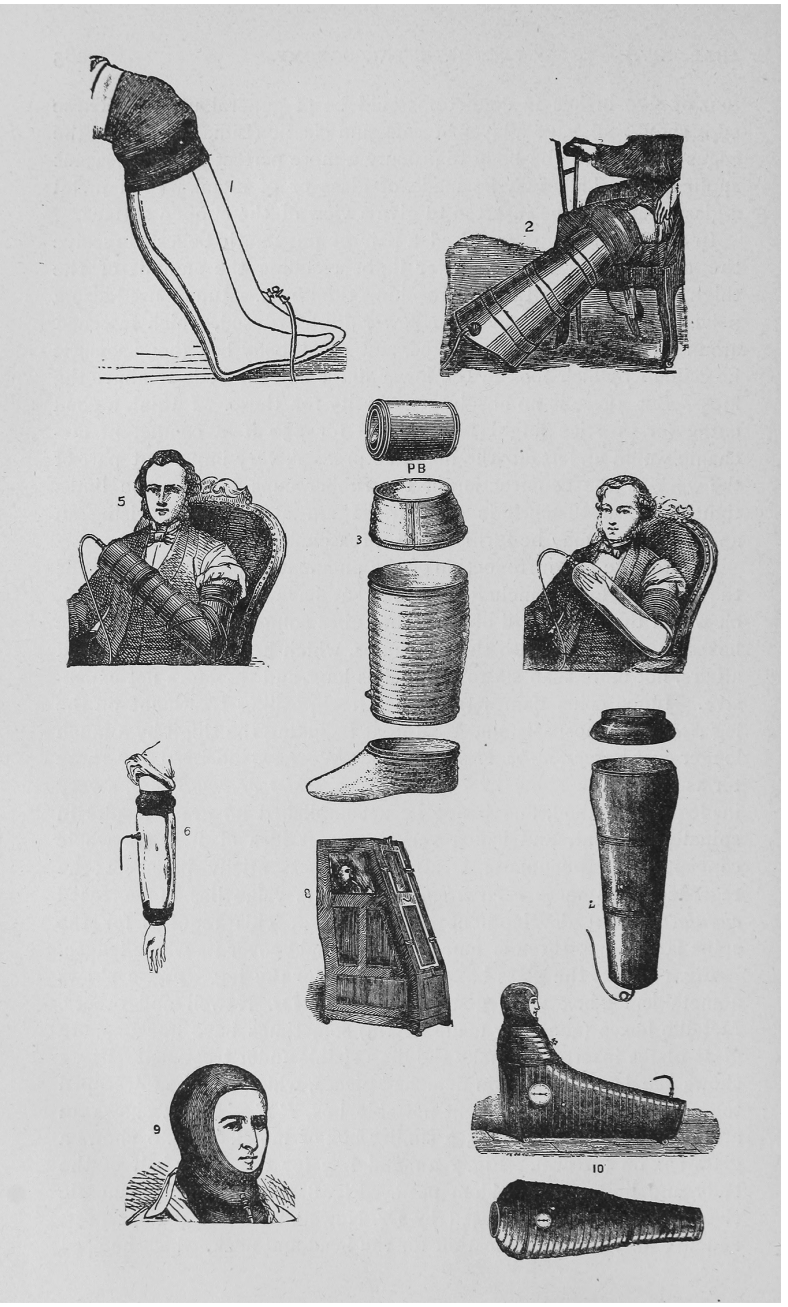


Figure 1. Illustration from Joseph Rodes Buchanan, *Therapeutic Sarcognomy* (Boston: J. G. Cupples, 1891), 284.

be said to be part of a class of objects, or even part *in the same way* of a class of objects.) For whom do they circulate, when, where? What do such things—ones a literary character might "find" among the bric-a-brac of the story she's narrating; ones a literary critic or a philosopher of language might produce—help us understand about objects broadly understood? About objects or things found or made in literary works and out, set to the purposes for which they were intended or reused and refunctionalized? What protocols of reading, what axiologies, what languages does the use of these things entail? What sorts of things (languages, institutions, conventions, habits) condition and mediate our relation to the things we find before us? Or constitute "us" as the sorts of things that find other things before them?

I ask these questions at a time when the definitions of many of my terms seem less and less secure (terms like "value," "use" and "reuse," "purpose" and "repurpose," "circulation," "literature," "literary work" or "literariness," "language," "I" or "we"), their value increasingly in question or in decline. "Things," "objects," and "matter," however, appear to stand on firmer and more strongly set conceptual bases today, and to enjoy more academic currency than they have at least since the heyday of so-called Thing Theory and the rise (in anthropology and in cultural studies more broadly) of material cultural studies in the 1990s and early 2000s.[6] Finally, the subtle razors of mathematical ontology (in Alain Badiou's work) and the critique of correlationism (in Quentin Meillassoux's) are used, to great effect, against philosophical mediation, and in particular against Marx's readers in the Frankfurt school and in Althusser's circle. The reasons for these phenomena are not simply given; it's hard to assess where causes end and symptoms begin; the landscape stretches out, uneven. And it's harder still to imagine how we might relate the decreasing certainty regarding my first cluster of terms; the increasing assurance with which "matter," "things," and "objects" seem to be handled in academic language; and the critique of mediation offered in the name of the event, or of the "absolutization of the one."

In *On the Nature of Marx's Things* I trace to Marx's earliest consideration of "things" an alternative to, or an alternative form of, the dialectical approach that has framed his work probably since Friedrich Engels sought to marry it to the natural philosophy of his time (in the fragmentary work now known as *Dialectics of Nature*, from roughly 1872 to 1882), and certainly since the publication of Georgi Plekhanov's *The Development of the Monist View of History* in 1895.[7] I take as my first epigraph above Adorno's compact, undeveloped version of this alternative: the "breaking, reflecting" of the drive, the impulse, the stress, or the urge [*Drang*] toward the object. My intention in this book—in pursuing things through some of Marx's texts, and in the

Figure 2. Gustave Doré, "Little Red Riding Hood." In Charles Perrault and Moritz Hartmann, *Märchen Nach Perrault Neu Erzählt von Moritz Hartmann* (Stuttgart: E. Hallberger, 1870). Tulane University Online Exhibits, http://library.tulane.edu/exhibits/items/show/81 (accessed April 23, 2017).

work of some of his readers; and in doing so in conjunction with Adorno's paradoxical injunction (if that's what his parataxis expresses) that thought should pursue "nearness by distance"—is fivefold.

I want to understand *how* "things" fall into and out of networks that assign them sense, value, even function, and how they fall in these ways *today*, under the highly discontinuous regime of international credit- and information-capitalism.

I want to suggest that the consolidation, in academic languages, of a form of philosophical realism tied to the terms "object," "matter," and "thing" serves to rescue many of the concepts it appears to target: the "human," the "subject," "autonomy."

I want to reflect upon a subterranean, Lucretian strain in Marx's thought that's been obscured by attention to the contradictory lexicons that *Capital* uses to describe how value accrues to commodities: the lexicons of fetishism (as is notorious) and of chrematistics. (They are contradictory in this sense: the language of fetishism imagines value to accrue to a commodity inasmuch

as its circulation is arrested, and it comes to be invested with a transcendent, mythological value derived from a sphere external to the sphere of circulation; chrematistics, to the contrary, imagines the value of an object or a commodity or a token to flow from its circulation itself.)

I want to show the long and definitive influence of a special form of philology in Marx's thinking—what I'll call *necrophilology*, to distinguish it from the "philological positivity" that Michel Foucault saw emerging, alongside the "new" disciplines of economics and biology, roughly at the turn of the nineteenth century.[8] Marx's necrophilology puts the stress on medial, relational, or dynamic processes. Translation is necrophilology's principal modality; principles of identity running from the logical principles found in Aristotle's *organon,* through Marx's immediate concern in *Capital,* the form of the propositions that found classical political economy ("Production is [equal to] consumption") are its main target. "Translation" here is extensively used: I intend practices that put different natural and national languages into relation, often across periods, but also practices or mechanisms internal to each language. If a national "language" is a thing, then its chronological borders are unsettled by translation in the first sense, and its coherence, its self-identity, is unsettled in the second sense.

Finally, I want to make what will appear a local methodological point. Reading Marx (and after Marx) for things, necrophilologically, means attending to the way in which Marx's (and others') reflections on what we would normally refer to as *physical* and *conceptual* objects (or concepts *tout court*) double as reflections on the form of statements regarding objects or concepts. I recognize that "double as" is an unhappy phrase for approaching how Marx imagines the drift between these two levels of his argument. To have one level of argument "double as" another is all "reflection," no "breaking," to use Adorno's terms. The metaphor of the "level" is hardly better. Yes, "levels" and reflexive "doubling" remit to just the sorts of generally Linnean taxonomies that Engels envisioned. They bring Marx's argument in line with a conception of organic form and development, and with a conception of sovereignty also found in what Foucault calls the "new philology": the sovereignty of the higher-order "level" or "double" over the lower-level one; "abstraction," both logico-epistemological and economic, translated almost without loss into dominant accounts of sovereignty; residual theological concepts now filled, not with explicit *political* content, but with epistemic "objects" of greater degrees of abstraction, or complexity, or consciousness, than the ones on which they stand and from which they will develop. We might instead say that reading for things after Marx, reading necrophilologically, means attending to the way in which Marx's (and others') reflections

on *physical* and *conceptual* objects *translate into* reflections on the form of statements regarding concepts. To read *necrophilologically* is to read with an eye to how texts both "reflect" and "break" the drive to the object. It means to engage arguments not as formal, tendentially organic, autopoetic factories of "life," as philosophies or philologies of life, but as partial *drives,* as *dynamics,* as polemics, as devices for producing deformed forms, engaged in violent practices of translation: as a thermodynamics. Every argument about objects after Marx is *literary* in this quite specific way.

What Was Life?

Why the garish name? Necrophilology is a word that recalls the dead, the tomb, even (as we will see in discussing Marx's critique of general equivalence alongside and in Herman Melville's story "Bartleby, the Scrivener") the Tombs. It recalls, but seeks a distance from, a more obvious, more clamorously asserted principle: that of *life.* The spectral return of the beloved; the preference for what does not (yet, or any longer) live. In necrophilology, to return to Adorno's words, "the urge towards the object is broken, reflected [der, in dem der Drang zum Objekt gebrochen, reflektiert ist]." With this difference: necrophilology may indeed have "this condition, that those who reflect do not incorporate the object into themselves: nearness by distance," but it is not, for Marx, "non-violent reflection [*Betrachtung*]."

I've referred to "philosophies or philologies of life." They are, it appears, machinic, autopoetic—and contrast with death-drives, literature, necrophilology, and the special form of translation I wish to address. The term "philologies of life" is likely to seem obscure and to cast some doubt on the more recognizable expression "philosophies of life" (vitalism, organicism, certain theologies, and so on). Here's what I mean.

Recall Friedrich Nietzsche's description of what he calls the "antinomy of philology":

> Dies ist die Antinomie der Philologie: man hat das *Alterthum* thatsächlich immer nur *aus der Gegenwart* verstanden—und soll nun die *Gegenwart aus dem Alterthum* verstehen? Richtiger: aus dem Erlebten hat man sich das Alterthum erklärt, und aus dem so gewonnenen Alterthum hat man sich das Erlebte *taxirt*, abgeschätzt. So ist freilich das *Erlebniß* die unbedingte Voraussetzung für einen *Philologen*—das heißt doch: erst Mensch sein, dann wird man erst als Philolog fruchtbar sein.
>
> (This is the antinomy of philology: people have always endeavoured to understand antiquity by means of the present—and shall the present now be

> understood by means of antiquity? Better: people have explained antiquity to themselves out of their own experiences [*aus der Erlebten,* from what they have *lived,* from the *lived*]; and from the antiquity thus acquired [*gewonnen*] they have assessed the value of their experiences [*hat man sich das Erlebte* taxirt*, abgeschätzt,* assessed, appraised the value of what they have lived]. Experience [*das Erlebniß*], therefore, is certainly an essential prerequisite for a philologist—that is, the philologist must first of all be a man; for then only can he be productive as a philologist.)[9]

What makes it "better," *righter,* more productive of fertility and fruitfulness, to replace the dialectical antinomy (that antiquity is understood always and only through the present; that the present is only and always understood through the past) with Nietzsche's second lexicon? Certainly, the deployment of a vitalist vocabulary (heard of course in *Erlebniß*; perhaps more mutedly in the unconditionality or un-thinged-ness, *Unbedingtheit,* that Nietzsche grants the preconditions of thought; in the command *erst Mensch [zu] sein,* first being a man, a human animal; even in the use of the agricultural-genetic *fruchtbar* (fertile, fruitful), where we might expect a more rationalist term (such as we remark in the language of *verstehen* and *Verstand,* understanding and mind). "Righter" philology does not seek understanding. Man, Nietzsche says, first takes from lived experience *clarity*; it illuminates (*erklären*) antiquity, and thus *wins* it. That *won* antiquity then provides what we can now call the index by means of which we philologists, *wir Philologen,* assess and evaluate our lived experience. Abstraction lies behind us, historically; the Kantian language (antinomies, understanding, mind) has been purged, relegated to antiquity: a *Lebensphilologie* takes its place, a *Philologie des Lebens*. "Life," taken before it is grasped conceptually, prior to its subjection to understanding, even before it is articulated as a word: "life" loved, cared for, experienced, not as though Logos (Logos cared for, attended to, *loved: philo-logia*) renders *Verstand,* but inasmuch as Logos stands against and before *Verstand*.

There is a price to pay, however, for a philology of life that purges from life Logos grasped as reason or thought, as abstract understanding: just how "man" achieves "clarity" is now unthinkable, incomprehensible. How, or why, one would say "life," or call this or that experience a lived-experience, is not the purview of thought. Even the question whether that first moment of clarity *is* an *experience,* an immediate experience of the living being, the experience, say, that makes a man a man, *before* he becomes a fruitful philologist and *before* he can call lived- experience "life"—even this question cannot be rightly posed, or not, at any rate, with the hope of producing

an answer whose truth or falsehood, or even whose effectiveness, could be assessed, *taxiert* or *abgeschätzt*. What would we be doing if we asked? Could we ask, without committing ourselves to understanding, without making *Verstand* the faculty intended to assess whether yes, "clarity" is achieved as a lived-experience *before* man enters into the realm of understanding? Aren't the basic predicates of identity, for instance, the ones that allow us to assert that this or that is (an) *Erlebniß,* even the tautological expression "life is life," a man is a man, a mug a mug, or *Erlebniß ist Erlebniß*—aren't these to be heard in, even *as*, the register of *Verstand*?[10]

Esther Summerson descends Dickens's stairs sometime between March 1852 and September 1853. Across town, Marx survives, rather miserably, on the royalties he draws from columns written for the *New York Daily Tribune,* and on Engels's largesse. Why bring lexicons, tactics, approaches, and problems formed and ripened more than a century and a half after the publication of *Bleak House* and *Capital,* of Friedrich Schiller's operas and of Freud's analyses of the sovereignty of the drive, into contact—violent, untimely, inelegant contact—with these earlier works? I am making mine provisionally "the antinomy of philology," endeavoring both to understand "antiquity" (a relative antiquity: the moment of the consolidation of industrial capitalism in Europe), "by means of the present" (a moment when credit- and information-capitalism enter a moment of crisis), *and* to understand "the past" by means of the present. I bear in mind the internal limit Nietzsche draws for this antinomic philology of life and experience—the limit marked by the exclusion, from a "life" subject to this double mediation, of thought that takes "life" as its object.

I'd like to describe how things stand today. The philosophical currency of new materialisms, speculative realism, and of object-oriented ontology joins hands intellectually with four developments of significance since the publication of Arjun Appadurai's 1986 edited volume *The Social Life of Things* and Fred Myers's 2001 answering volume, *The Empire of Things*.[11] These are: the consolidation of the concept of the anthropocene, and the consequent derogation of the human animal's privilege as the bearer of *ethical* substance, and of consciousness's (and *a fortiori* human consciousness's) definitive role in making what human animals call history; the rise of animal and animality studies; the adoption, in philosophy and social studies, of the epigenetic paradigm, and hence the move toward grounding many forms of identity previously ascribed to rather vaporous conceptions of culture in the dynamic, even *plastic* encounter of one sort of "thing," the human animal, with other sorts of "things" (with rocks and stones and trees, and with the Wordsworthian words "rocks" and "stones" and "trees"); finally, the centrality given the

datum and its technical platforms, digital translations, aggregation, and interpretation by data-driven research in the humanities and social sciences. We might call this group of loosely coordinated circumstances the current disposition in Anglophone as well as European academic culture. (Or the current "mood," or the current "state of mind": I intend what Husserl calls *Stimmung,* a word translated into English in all three ways.) Here, "things," "objects," "matter," and companion terms rise up like positive, real conditions to designate the finitude of the human animal.

They also arise to announce new ways in which such animals enter into circulation; seek, are granted and acquire value; and enter into relations with other things. The language is often utopian and animistic, and the argument explicitly deflationary: it's not just that human animals are *like* things, and that their relation to things (objects, matter, etc.) is *like* the relation such things entertain to other things—but that human animals *are* things (objects, material, etc.), and only arrogate to themselves distinctions in kind from other things as ways of exercising a fantasmatic domination over them (over other objects, matter, etc.). Hence a "democracy of objects," as Levi Bryant calls it; hence the adoption into lay fields, and the dilution, of the generalized "principle of symmetry" developed by Michel Callon and Bruno Latour. Intended as an analytic frame serving to "dissolve" the "division" between "'natural' and 'social,' 'object' and 'subject,' 'material' and 'symbolic,'" this "principle of symmetry" eventuates in what Latour himself describes as "some absurd 'symmetry between humans and non-humans.'"[12] "Objects" are agents or actants (for actor-network theory, at any rate), yes, but not because they can be understood, by analogy to an impervious and indeed strengthened notion of autonomous human agency, to *intend* to act in networks. Latour's own irritation at the widespread misuse (as he takes it) of the "principle of symmetry" is symptomatic. "There exists no relation whatsoever," he writes,

> between "the material" and "the social world," because it is this very division which is a complete artifact. To reject such a divide is not to "relate" the heap of naked soldiers "with" the heap of material stuff: it is to redistribute the whole assemblage from top to bottom and beginning to end. There is no empirical case where the existence of two coherent and homogeneous aggregates, for instance technology "and" society, could make any sense. A[ctor] N[etwork] T[heory] is not, I repeat is not, the establishment of some absurd "symmetry between humans and non-humans." To be symmetric, for us, simply means not to impose a priori some spurious asymmetry among human intentional action and a material world of causal relations.[13]

The drift into animism; or into "democracies of objects" that include that object, the human animal; or into new materialisms—this is not (or

not only) the result of shoddy or sentimental thought but of a historical and institutional logic no irritation will manage to exorcise. The editor of one collection of essays referred, in 1998, to "a second stage in the development of material culture studies," now that "the point that things matter can . . . be argued to have been made."[14] The "undisciplined" contributors to the volume, titled *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter,* take an "unshackled approach to the topic of material culture . . . expressed in a freedom from reductionism" (4). The pieces collected in *Doing Things with Things: The Design and Use of Everyday Objects* are united, the volume's editors write, "not just [in] their rejection of the standard notion of objects and their properties as inert, inherently meaningless, and quite alien to ourselves . . . [but also in] emphasiz[ing] the need to understand the relations between people and objects in terms of process and change."[15] W. J. T. Mitchell put it like this: "The slogan for our times then [Mitchell is writing in 2000] is, not things fall apart, but things come alive."[16]

The "shackles" of disciplinary "reductionism," the principle that "objects and their properties" are "inert," "alien," and "inherently meaningless": who would not wish to cast off these mind-forged manacles? Things come alive. And among them, just *one* of them but also first among equal things in being the "thing" conscious of and responsive to the quickening of things, the thing to which, precisely, no-thing is alien (as Pico's humanist line has it: "Medium te mundi posui, ut circumspiceres inde comodius quicquid est in mundo" [I have set you at the midpoint of the world, so that from here you may observe with ease all that lies in the world]): "ourselves," "people," individuals, "humans."[17] Under threat conceptually from post- and anti-humanist philosophies and from economic and cultural forces encouraging a general equivalence among subjects-as-consumers and among things-as-commodities, the human animal finds itself anew in its objectality, in its thing-ness: *It thing-eth itself.*

This relative quickening of the human thing is a tricky matter to take up today. Consider how we frame it—how, in the first place, the academic institution frames this enlivening of the human thing. (The claim is broader—institutions *in general,* and not just academic ones, condition the enlivening of the human thing, in different, uneven, and contradictory ways: institutions like the market, the family, the state.) In the academy, then, we remark on an uneasy reciprocity between our "coming alive," the circulation and the processes of valuation and relating of academic things (of things, object, and matter in the academic context), and what the British researchers Roger Brown and Helen Carasso call "the Marketisation" of higher education.[18] The thing-as-*datum* not only marks the finitude of the human animal, it provides *homo academicus* with value tradeable across markets and languages,

and it transforms the university into a cloistered factory for the production of globally tradeable, translatable information-commodities. Brown and Carasso's study focuses on the United Kingdom; the comparable work reflecting on the development of the modern university in the United States (and globally) is Bill Readings's *The University in Ruins*. Readings tracks the effects of the use of the vacuous criterion of "excellence" in assessing research and teaching outcomes. Here is how he describes the state of affairs: "Excellence serves as the unit of currency within a closed field . . . a purely internal unit of value that effectively brackets all questions of reference or function, thus creating an internal market. Henceforth," Readings concludes, "the question of the University is only a question of relative value-for-money, the question posed to a student who is situated entirely as a *consumer*, rather than as someone who wants to think."[19] "As an integrating principle," he maintains, "excellence has the singular advantage of being entirely meaningless, or to put it more precisely, non-referential."[20] Disciplines, especially those that took shape in funding regimes inspired in one version of the Cold War (Title VI programs, comparativist disciplines imagined as attending to cosmopolitan rather than narrow national concerns, the modern humanities), find their standing in the university in question when they appear to fail the test of nonreferentiality. This failure might take one of two shapes: a discipline might fail to satisfy the conditions of "excellence" by seeking to link the free-floating commodity form of the university to some object or state of affairs outside of it (that is, by producing an object of knowledge that "refers" to an actually existing object or state of affairs outside the closure of the discipline), or by producing, within the strangely self-referential value system that Readings imagines the university to have become, excesses or lack of reference—spots where the closure of the university discourse is threatened from within. (In this case, we would say that the discipline produces "objects" that cannot be valued in the terms given by other disciplines—excessive or defective with respect to them, or both.)

The claim, I said, is broader. And it attaches to a further difficulty. We find ourselves perhaps uncomfortable today linking an institution's "value" with the "use" and "reference" of the objects the institution, or the discipline, produces as proper to it. We are ill at ease, perhaps, because "value," "use," and the reference to an extra-mural or extra-discursive "real" stand on positivist ground that becomes axiomatic for political philosophy and for the philosophy of science after Comte and after (and against) *The German Ideology*. "Positive philosophy," for which "things," "objects," and the "real" form the substance to which institutional discourses might refer extra-murally, stands upon *la physique sociale* rather than upon theological or metaphysical explana-

tions of the causes of phenomena; upon the axiom that, as in Marx, material states of affairs have a causal, logical, even moral priority over symbolic ones. This is what we mean when we say that a shift in the object-field, that is, in the structure of the market, is primary with respect to the isomorphous, or corresponding, shift in any discourse-field that describes it systematically. There are, of course, reasons for accepting these axioms and following this path, which leads, as Marx famously writes in *The German Ideology*, "from earth to heaven," *from* "men, developing their material production and their material intercourse [and who thus] alter . . . their real existence," *to* men altering "their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life," the *German Ideology* proceeds, "is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (*Nicht das Bewußtsein bestimmt das Leben, sondern das Leben bestimmt das Bewußtsein*).[21] Material objects and practices precede, drive, and cause corresponding symbolic, disciplinary ones (all this verbal jostling to be captured by Marx's own verb "to determine," *bestimmen*): the discipline follows the positive fact. The presumption that our object, the concept of value historically defined, shifts before the discipline defining it, stands on the notion that the practices we call "valuing," "assessing," "consuming," and so on precede and determine their concepts, as well as the metaphysical and theological systems we employ to explain their causes. If nothing in thought is, on this description, *given,* enskied, transcendental, a priori, then neither is the axiom of determination, *das Leben bestimmt das Bewußtsein*. And if so, the distinction between the discipline and its objects cannot be made on causal grounds, on the grounds that one is determinative of the other, or on the principle that one, the object or its discipline, determines the value of the other, takes from that determination its own value, and maps the relative value of other objects and other disciplines against that initial, baptismal, and reflexive moment of autodetermination.

Institutions quicken, enliven, create and assign, and withdraw and administer value—and they depend on the sorts of "integrating principles" that Readings describes; they stand on and reproduce protocols for the legitimation, comprehensibility, and valuation of the objects proper to them. Imagine synonyms for a "closed . . . field" and its opposite, presumably a field "open" to real-world states of affairs; or, to stick with Readings's economic metaphors, synonyms for a field of products imagined as commodities, and a field of products that "function"; or for an internal market and its notional counterpart, meaning, or ("more precisely") reference. (Readings stipulates "more precisely," because the conceptual objects produced *within* the "university of excellence," like any objects produced by an institution, are not meaningless: they do indeed have meaning *within* the cloister, intra-murally.

Even the "more proper" opposition between the "internal market" and "reference" is weak, since the university of excellence's conceptual objects will indeed refer to other conceptual objects produced intra-murally.) Imagine. Where Readings's critique of institutions places the "internal market," substitute the psychoanalytic notion of *displacement*; place on the other side, where he offers "reference" and "function," the notion of *condensation*. Place *exchange-value* on one side; place *use-value* on the other. *Autopoetics*; *allopoetics.* (I'm thinking now of Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana; of Niklas Luhmann.) The critique of institutions in Readings's vein attacks their formalism: institutions, autopoetic institutions, produce things-for-themselves and take from those things their identity as machines for producing such things. In this suspended, circular state, neither of our (range of contrasting, opposed) fields can be said to determine or produce the other. The form appropriate to this circumstance—its tense and syntax—expresses the relation between production and object, or between the statement and its object, intermedially: it stands somewhere between activity and passivity. We turn to classical philology for *deponent* forms (as when we have Cicero articulate one of the hoariest lines in European jurisprudence, "Res loquitur ipsa, iudices, quae semper valet plurimum" (The thing or the fact or the case, *res,* speaks for itself), abbreviated in common and tort law as "Res ipsa loquitur" (the thing itself speaks), or "the thing speaks (itself)," or, taking *res* as "the case," "the case speaks [itself]").[22] "You do not call *Think* a deponent," John Horne Tooke writes. "And yet it is as much a deponent as *Reor*. Remember, where we now say *I Think*, the antient expression was—*Me thinketh*, i.e. *Me Thingeth*, *It Thingeth me*." Where "I" stand, act, and think, that is, where I produce conceptual objects, there too a conceptual object or a "thing," "It," the autopoetic institution, also stands and acts, thinks, "things," produces me. And, as I will suggest, inversely: where "it," the thing, *Es*, was or is, there too do "I" or will "I," the thing "it" "thinks," *be.*

To this point, I've been letting "things" and "objects" drift lazily into synonymy, and words (like the word "mug") into analogy with what they refer to—the "things" and "objects" that make up the found, "true" or "trowed" world, as Horne Tooke puts it in his *Epea Pteroenta*. This will appear strategic. It is more likely to provoke comment after Saussure's shadow falls on the philosophy of natural languages than before academic culture wore openly the habit of the sign's arbitrariness. Putting literary "things" in play with objects or words or worlds; loosely letting these terms and contexts light one another up and borrow from one another senses and values across levels of specificity, generic borders, conventions, degrees of fictionality—this means something different today than it did when Dickens imagined his novel's world of

things, or when Marx and Horne Tooke quite differently think through how "thought," "thing," and "thinging" hang together, or indeed in 1965, when Althusser addresses the "play on the word *real*" on which "the modern forms of empiricism" base their theoretical expression—a theoretical expression in "the innocent form of a theory of *models.*"[23]

What might it mean to address ourselves to the *system* or to the semantic field formed by the terms "thing," "object," "matter," "fact" "real," *today*? Today, we think about Dickens's things through what Martin Heidegger calls "the short semantic history [*Bedeutungsgeschichte*] . . . of the words *res*, *Ding*, *causa*, *cosa*, *chose*, and *thing*."[24] We think about objects in the mid–nineteenth century (and, of course, not just then: the object "we" that appears to do the thinking, to be the subject of our little grammatico-historical allegory, is also to be thought: Descartes's *sum res cogitans,* I am a thing, *res,* that thinks, is also *res ipsa retur*) through and with what the past centuries have designated as objects in the fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy, commodity culture, and so on. We think about things minding carefully the simultaneous "semantic *reducibility* of *things* to *objects*" and "semantic *irreducibility* of *things* to *objects*" that Bill Brown remarked, following Heidegger. Take the banal observation that objects cannot be the same today, under the regime of international credit-capital, as they were at another moment, say in 1852–53 or in 1867, under the regime of European industrial capitalism. When we refer to the "object" in this sense, and contrast one historical moment to another, we have in mind a number of sorts of objects, without however drawing a terribly strict distinction among these types. We have in mind, for instance, the "mental object" that's constituted by a concept, call it the concept of "value," or the concept of "lower-middle-class British tourist kitsch," or the concept of a "general equivalent." The object *today* is, or is conditioned by, the value-form at work in international credit-capital rather than the form of value that attaches to the physical production of this or that concrete commodity, whose relation to yet another mental object—"labor," say—would have also changed with the emergence of what Maurizio Lazzarato calls "immaterial labor."[25] However, when we refer to the "object," we have in mind not just "mental objects" but material objects as well, "actually existing" objects that I can take up or point to, say a mug or this table, or *potentially* existing objects, like the king of France, or even fictitious but representable objects, like Dickens's mug with "A Present from Tunbridge Wells" printed upon its side. *This* object, then, would be the table or the mug inasmuch as it is the product of different labor practices and technologies (including the labor practice of writing and publishing a novel such as *Bleak House*), inasmuch as it is put to different uses and is composed of different materials in the year

2016 than it was, or would have been, in 1852 or in 1867. Finally and most mysteriously, when we mark the differences between mental and material objects *today*; the differences between those two sorts of objects today, at the moment when the transformation of credit into an internationally tradable commodity reaches a crisis; and mental and material objects in 1852 or in 1867, at the moment when thinking about things and objects crosses the gate from the Kantian register to the register of the political economy of industrial capitalism; when we mark these two sorts of difference we also have in mind a class of objects of thought formed by the *relation* between mental objects and material ones, *today* as well as in relation to another, some other, historical moment. Here the term "object" will designate *neither* the mental object nor the material one that I can point to or designate (whether actually existing or simply a possible object) but, rather, something like the relation between them, or better yet, the process of *translation* between them. (There are at least two of these processes, then: one translation happening, as it were, *today,* at this instant: simultaneous translation, instant translation, a translation internal to a single, atomic moment; *and* the translation happening when any other time comes between us and the object, a phrase to be understood only when "us" is also an object into which any other time intrudes.)

Excluding this brief transit through the concept of translation, to which I will return in brief, this confusion regarding the object seems to me well enough known, if not always precisely enough articulated.[26] It also seems to me uninteresting, except to the degree that the formal inference *from* the existence of "mental objects" *to* the hypothesis of "existing *ideal* objects" (which cannot be inferred from the existence of "actual" or "material" objects) may underlie both the strain of Platonic communism that we find in the work of Badiou and (differently) of Meillassoux, and the weak ontology associated with the work of speculative realists in the object-oriented ontology vein. I will return to this Platonic, formal hypothesis in my last chapter, "Uncountable Matters." For now, though, it seems to me uninteresting, even if it is probably true, even if it is a matter of great political and social urgency, to say that the crisis in credit-capital we are witness to in Europe and the United States requires of scholars and of activists a reorganization of lexicons, of forms of address, temporal horizons, and political and practical priorities. Yes indeed, concepts of the first sort, mental objects such as "national sovereignty," "political representation," "universal suffrage," "labor," "commodity," or "market" must be rethought in light of the failure of the European Union's articulation of its political and economic horizons, with the colors lent by the financial crash of the first decade of the twenty-first century, with the Brexit vote in 2016, with the election of Trump in the United States and the seeming re-emergence of explicitly and nakedly

racist political movements across Europe and the Americas. (I say "seeming re-emergence": these movements have seldom been far from the surface, and have never ceased to work in and through the institutions of the most enlightened Western democracies.) Objects of the second sort as well—material, actually existing objects or possible ones, like a "laborer" or the mug or table that the laborer helps to produce, are to be rethought, shifted, changed, put into different patterns of circulation, redistributed, expropriated. And the mysterious third class of objects—translational or relational objects, objects understood to be the procedure by means of which some translation between mental and material objects is effected—these too are now to be rethought and reconfigured, under the regime of credit-capital. "Translation," or "mediation," or any of a number of terms that might fit this last class of objects—these too are to be refunctionalized under the regime of the crisis of credit-capital.[27] But to the extent that thinking is imagined as such a task, as a form of labor upon conceptual or mental objects, or upon material objects, or upon the relation between them, to the extent that thinking is undertaken with a view to redrawing the object in conformity with new historical circumstances, to this extent the goal and the means of thought remain the reproduction of a classic correspondence between "historical circumstance" and this tripartite object. On this description, the work of thought might be understood as a form of historicism; it would be more accurate to say that on this description thought tends to reproduce the matheme of sufficient reason, the *principium reddendae rationis* that we can trace to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, or further to Baruch Spinoza: *nihil est sine ratione*, there is no object, mental or conceptual, material, or relational without a cause or a reason. This reason *may* be of the historical variety, as when we seek to make the object respond to different circumstances, but the principle is more than simply causal or historical, more than merely concerned with the determination of this or that object, of whatever sort, here and now, in 2018, in 1965, in 1867, or in 1852–53. "There is nothing that does not have a reason" makes a stronger ontological claim ("whatever is has a reason," or better still, "to be is to have a reason"), and a stronger logical one as well: "reasons" or "causes" are identity predicates of "objects" and "states of affairs," *and vice versa*. It is this reciprocity that has tended, in the history of philosophy, to make it possible to induce, from the principle of sufficient reason, a subsistent and axiomatic principle of identity, whether this is a principle of mathematical identity, an "object" and its "*rationes*" being, as one might say, not not-one; *or*, in the strong form we find in G. W. F. Hegel (and before that, in Plato's *Parmenides*), the principle of the "identity of identity and non-identity" that founds the dialectic.

This is not a particularly new story, despite the gilding given it by Badiou's

endorsement of the principle of mathematical identity.[28] Remark, though, how the story changes necrophilologically, when the term "translation" is set to work in place of the concept of identity that obtains when we invoke the principle of sufficiency. Let's return to Esther Summerson's words. She's remembering for us finding the little source of light as she descends the stairs. It is a very British thing, no doubt, this mug, "A Present from Tunbridge Wells," that holds the lighted wick. A token or Dickensian metonym of lower-middle-class British tourist kitsch, it casts its flickering light on the Jellyby household, illuminating the comings and goings of the London family with an exemplary schematism: the Jellybys take their consistency for Dickens's readers from the light shed by such narrative objects, which are the clamorous material correlatives of Esther Summerson's narrative biases, concretizations of her point of view that the novel makes to speak, characterize, and judge. Objects like this mug do work; they labor in the novel, refunctionalized as narrative instances just as they are refunctionalized, within the narration, to serve as lamps rather than mugs by the addition of a wick.

However easily they may agree to their refunctionalization within the narrative, such tokens travel with difficulty across linguistic borders. Gustav Meyrink's 1910 German translation, "Als wir hinuntergingen, sahen wir eine aus einem Trinkbecher mit der Aufschrift 'Andenken an den Tunbridge-Brunnen' improvisierte Lampe auf dem Treppenabsatz blaken," trades Dickens's (or Esther Summerson's) word "present" for *Andenken*, a souvenir, a curio; the original's "finding" of the mug's lampness, one might say, for the adjectival "eine improvisierte Lampe"; and the place name "Tunbridge Wells" for the German "Tunbridge-Brunnen"—the first two, changes in the direction of making explicit what Summerson, or Dickens, left decorously cloudy, the anamnesic role that these tokens have in the novel; and their impropriety, their status *as* tokens, substitutes, bits of out-of-place material doing improvised work, tropes.[29] In short, their status as translations, and translations of the sort that rename proper names as common ones, "Tunbridge Wells" becoming the German "Tunbridge-Brunnen." (This is hardly, I hasten to say, unique to German translations of this passage. Different translational conventions obtain at different moments and in different contexts, and at least one early French translation, Henriette Loreau's version of 1857, also translates the proper name into a common one: "Souvenir des eaux de Tunbridge."[30])

In my description of the avatars of the Jellyby's Dickensian mug I used the term "translation" to designate interlinguistic as well as intralinguistic phenomena. I suggested that the "Present from Tunbridge Wells" is a token of Esther Summerson's perspective, and that it—and other similar tokens—

"labor" in the novel, refunctionalized as narrative instances. I've also used "translation," more conventionally, to designate interlinguistic: phenomena, as when we say that Dickens's English becomes more explicit when it is translated into Meyrink's German. In addition, I've suggested that "translation" has to do with the conceptualization of the object as such: as a result, it seems to be the mechanism that holds together what we would then be inclined to call a system, the system of material objects, conceptual objects, and their relation. And yet the brief we hold for replacing the philosophical figure of identity by the figure of translation comes in fact from the term's instability. "Translation" holds together in a system the circuit of material objects, conceptual objects, and their relation, along with the familiar and less familiar inter- and intralinguistic mechanisms of substitution and refunctionalization that I have noted. It does so, however, not only by making terms, levels, and objects tokens for other terms, levels, and sorts of objects, but also by denoting incompatible procedures, processes at work in different times, in different ways, with respect to different objects. As a result, "translation" is not a concept whose object can be strictly or rigidly determined; its borders cannot be fixed; it is not, under any aspect, identical with itself—even in the strong Hegelian sense in which "translation's" identity with itself might be imagined as the identity of identity and nonidentity. Translation operates excessively and insufficiently at once, without there being any clear way of discriminating which is which, or of deciding which of the two might produce what one would call a successful, or a better, translation, or even something that counts *as a translation*.

Take, for example, the lines from *Bleak House* that have been keeping us company, on and off. Here again is the English:

> I proposed to the children that they should come in and be very good at my table, and I would tell them the story of Little Red Riding Hood while I dressed; which they did, and were as quiet as mice, including Peepy, who awoke opportunely before the appearance of the wolf. When we went downstairs we found a mug with "A Present from Tunbridge Wells" on it lighted up in the staircase window with a floating wick, and a young woman, with a swelled face bound up in a flannel bandage blowing the fire of the drawing-room (now connected by an open door with Mrs. Jellyby's room) and choking dreadfully.

And now, Henriette Loreau's French version of 1857:

> J'invitai tous les marmots à entrer; ils se mirent autour de la table, et je leur racontai l'histoire du petit Chaperon rouge pendant que je m'habillais; ils restèrent cois comme des souris tapies dans leur trou, jusqu'à Pépy lui-même,

> qui s'éveilla tout juste pour l'arrivée du loup. Nous descendîmes quand j'eus fini mon conte, et nous trouvâmes, en guise de lampe, sur la fenêtre du palier, une mèche fumeuse, flottant dans un verre où ces mots étaient gravés: "Souvenir des eaux de Tunbridge." Dans le salon, une jeune femme, la figure enflée et tout embobinée de flanelle, s'évertuait à souffler le feu qui fumait horriblement.[31]

I noted the substitution of "eaux de Tunbridge" for Tunbridge Wells, a strategy this translation shares with the German. I would also draw your attention to a similar function of semantic explicitation—turning Esther Summerson's bare discovery of the illuminating mug into the discovery of a floating wick "en guise de lampe," acting as a lamp. These are both time-honored translation practices—Ciceronian, sense-for-sense translations. But Loreau produces an additional effect—the mimicry of Dickens's own mimicry of the plosive effect of breath, not choked breath at all but breath blown upon embers, which Dickens appears to achieve by the alliterative alternation of /f/ and /b/, "a young woman, with a swelled face bound up in a flannel bandage blowing the fire of the drawing-room." Compare Loreau's "nous trouvâmes, en guise de lampe, sur la fenêtre du palier, une mèche fumeuse, flottant dans un verre où ces mots étaient gravés: 'Souvenir des eaux de Tunbridge.' Dans le salon, une jeune femme, la figure enflée et tout embobinée de flanelle, s'évertuait à souffler le feu qui fumait horriblement." Loreau's effort is extraordinary—the imitation, at the level of the letter, of Dickens's representation of syncopated breath. And it is successful up to a point. What it is not, however, is a *translation* in the same way, for instance, as Loreau's "en guise de lampe" is a translation of the sense, or one sense, of Esther Summerson's happening upon the mug; nor is it a *translation,* in the sense even that the literal rendering of the word "well" into German or French might be; nor in the sense that the words "*Andenken*" or "*souvenir*" represent strong translations of Dickens's word "present" because they emphasize the anamnesic aspect of any "present," as well as the highly traditional biases of the narrator, Esther Summerson. One would in fact be hard pressed to hear the syncopated breathing and blowing, the alternating /f/ and /b/ in Dickens's sentence, *as* a mimesis of breathing, if it were not for the much more explicit, even intrusive alliteration we find in Loreau's translation. Indeed, without the retrospective effect of the translation upon the Dickensian original of which it is a souvenir, a memento presented for us to think over—without the formative after-effect, the enlightening breath of the translation blown upon the embers of the original, this mimesis of inspiration would be well-nigh invisible, inaudible—insensible. What Lo-

reau then achieves is what the choking, enflanelled child cannot, and what Dickens may not wish to achieve: to breathe voice into the letter of Dickens's prose, in order to borrow it as the ground for her own voice, for the voicing she supplies her own words. A small drama of mastery is played out here, of course—the translator supplying what Dickens's reticence, or Esther Summerson's, will withhold, and then drawing from that explicitation, from the revelation of the original's obscured resources, from the Chancery of its potentiality, the wealth and value of the narration, of the narrator, of the translation.

At the same time, this indiscreet translation recoils from at least one inter- and intralinguistic object that Dickens's text remembers more clearly, and quite a bit less modestly. In the little chorus of plosive voicings that Loreau discloses for her readers, and for Dickens's readers through her French, one thing at least is obscured. When Dickens's "Peepy" becomes the French "Pépy," we lose not just a letter, an /e/, but also the semantic register of the "peep" (and the tidy world of Victorian children who "peep" out at parents, mothers writing letters to Africa or whose sins are never to be disclosed). We lose the reflexive gesture of naming the child by doubling the name of a plosive letter, the letter /p/: /p/, /p/—as if poor Peepy's role in the novel, beyond bearing bruises and marking the neglect of his mother's telepathic philanthropy, were to be the embodiment of voice, the closing of lips about the flow of air, to be a child whose name also names the meaning-making interruption of breath, the threat to life and breath that this interruption-that-also-gives-meaning entails. And of course what else would a "Peepy" be, when it peeps out in Dickens's prose from behind Esther Summerson's modest arrogance, than the subtle linguistic and material object, the "pipi" we hear in English but not in the French "Pépy," that bears and expresses the explosive end and source of the writer's voice? A larger, more consequential drama plays out here, submerged: the dispersal of the concept of translation, now reading backwards, Dickens's alliteration readable in the English as a back-translation from Loreau's French, but more importantly shown now to produce the sufficient semantic register, the explanation for Dickens's alliterative prose, only by means of nonsemantic effects that fall entirely outside of Dickens's prose, even of his language—but also of Loreau's. Necrophilology: the love of, the excessive, even the redundant, love of the dead letter on which "life" stands or in which it takes shape; on which, in which, any politics that turns on the concept of life stands or takes expression: the life of the individual, collective life, the life of the state, a life that determines consciousness, the "good" life, "productive" life, life in common, even "precarious" life.

Translation as Critique

What are the consequences of this displacement of "identity" by "translation," what are its costs, what is its genealogy, what are its conditioning circumstances, what does the necrophilology of translation produce? So far, I have tried to indicate some of the ways in which the principle of identity that subtends sufficient reason also conditions the theory of value on display in Dickens's novel. By translating the little dramas, and the larger, but hidden, semi-Oedipal dramas of translation into the language that *Bleak House* offers—the language of the court at Chancery, of hidden wealth expected, exposed, gained and lost—by translating translation in this way I want to give a first sense of the alternatives that Dickens's prose might make available, in a literary register.

Marx's role in challenging, by means of the weak or wounded concept of translation, the philosophical figure of *identity* is determining. By "philosophical figure of identity" I mean to designate a system that's by now familiar to us, encompassing statements that regard the material object's identity (a mug is a mug; this mug I'm pointing at or this mug I find as I turn the stairs is itself and nothing other: even the semantic surplus offered by a little notation on its side is only conceived *as surplus* upon the self-identical object); mental or conceptual objects ("the Jellybys' mug is a token of middle-class values"); and their relation (of reference, of inclusion, of greater or lesser abstraction). Calling this "figure" a "system" means that among these three sorts of "things" or "objects," something like a perspicuous set of exchanges, a grammar, a translating machine, may be made available. It is this *machinic-organic* conception of the system of objects that Marx's necrophilology challenges. The story begins in my next chapter, where I take up Marx's early interest in the Democritean tradition, and in particular by analyzing the role that Lucretius plays in the fourth of Marx's *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy,* composed around 1839 as Marx is preparing his doctoral dissertation.

But for now, let me try to clarify the relation between what I'm calling necrophilology and this rather special, weakened-but-more-encompassing form of *translation* that lies in the nature of Marx's things. Take this famous example, in which translation of a certain sort is thematized. It's drawn from the first volume of *Capital* and provides a lexicon and a grammar in which to express the oddly social character of *things*—not *all* things, but rather that subclass of manufactured and circulated objects that Marx calls *commodities.* First Marx's German, then Moore and Aveling's translation, from 1887 and then reprinted and still in wide circulation:

> Es ist sinnenklar, daß der Mensch durch seine Thätigkeit die Formen der Naturstoffe in einer ihm nützlichen Weise verändert. Die Form des Holzes z.B. wird verändert, wenn man aus ihm einen Tisch macht. Nichtsdestoweniger bleibt der Tisch Holz, ein ordinäres sinnliches Ding. Aber sobald er als Waare auftritt, verwandelt er sich in ein sinnlich übersinnliches Ding. Er steht nicht nur mit seinen Füßen auf dem Boden, sondern er stellt sich allen andren Waaren gegenüber auf den Kopf, und entwickelt aus seinem Holzkopf Grillen, viel wunderlicher, als wenn er aus freien Stücken zu tanzen begänne.[32]
>
> (It is as clear as noon-day, that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by Nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table-turning" ever was.)

The transformation that Marx describes—the table's *Verwandlung,* alteration, from bare thing to commodity—is notoriously intractable. It is hedged about by reflexive formulations (*sich verwandeln,* it transforms itself) and a vivid theatrical tropology (*auftretten,* to step forth and also to come on stage: the table comes on stage, steps forth decked out as a commodity; it dances; it turns cartwheels, flipping its legs above its head); the passage flirts with paradox (Marx's table becomes both *sinnlich* and *übersinnlich*). And the circumstance this section of *Capital* describes is, though primary and in some ways mythical, exceptional: not every thing necessarily follows the topsy-turvy path that Marx's table sets before us. (A better way to put this will turn out to be: every thing necessarily *may* follow this path. "Things" in this more ample sense will mean not only manufactured items bearing the mysterious and abstracting stamp of their labor-value, but every item that can come into circulation and will thus acquire the stamp of a value translatable into such mysterious, abstracting common terms. Events, statements, natural objects, and so on.)

Say that this dancing table had a place *only* among the misty menagerie of imaginary objects and chimerical animals. We would say that it is drawn from the "mist-enveloped regions of the religious world" (die Nebelregion der religiösen Welt), and in this respect has no standing among the solid, useful material objects that make up our workaday world. It is real, but strictly in the way that the figure of Venus, for instance, is real. We can predicate certain things about such entities—that they have this or that function in societies; that they represent one or another concept, like "love" (Venus is love), or

the undifferentiated potentiality of mind, on which the evidence of the senses impresses phantoms of what was already there potentially (Aristotle: the mind or the soul, *nous* or *psyche,* is a wax tablet, a *tabula,* a table and a tablet); that they have these or those characteristics for some people at one or another time; that they "dance," or "step forth," or turn somersaults among other entities of the same sort, to these ends or those, in varying contexts. Marx's immensely influential thought-image moves from one world to the other; the translation that the wooden object undergoes is the vehicle on which the broader transformation of one world into the other is conveyed. To put it slightly more formally: the alteration, *Verwandlung*, of the bare, material substance ("wood"), to a useful form ("table"), and then to an exchangeable form (the commodity, "table-to-be-valued-against-other-manufactured-products") entails three other alterations as well: the mapping of the world of substances onto the world of commodities; the duplication of the device for this "altering" into labor; and the production of something else, call it a principle of speculation, that grasps the totality of this process of "movement" and "alteration." The first is entailed in the long-standing conception of material substance as potentiality, in this case the potentiality of its coming-into-circulation; the second, correspondingly, in the equally long-standing conception of states of affairs as potentially thinkable or available for conceptualization. The third can now be recognized as another product still, sensible and insensible, residually driving this late Marxian argument from its prehistory in the Hegelian system. To proceed along these three paths or these three translation mechanisms is to follow a single, unfolding track, immanent to all three.

The reflexive formulations we find at this point in *Capital* serve to make labor and speculation or thought coincident, if not synonymous: the unmarked movement from the transitive use of *verandern,* to change, as in "man changes the form of wood" to the impersonal form *wird verändert,* to the reflexive *sich verwandeln,* captures at the level of syntax the thesis that one great strand of Marx's argument supports—that the structure of determination is not only an epistemological principle but also an ontological one. It is not only this or that manufactured object that steps on stage, having coincidentally, fortuitously, or deliberately clothed itself in the mystical robes of the exchange-form. All objects as such are immanently related to their appearing-as-socially-exchangeable, even when they are not (yet) literally manufactured. The transformation (*Veränderung, Verwandlung*) of bare matter into matter-for-thought, of thing into object, discloses the object's social dimension, makes patent and illuminates, as if from inside the object, the mark of sociality or exchangeability the object already bears upon and as its

surface. There are few surprises so far. This punctual, symptomatic account of Marx's thought places him firmly in the line of Spinoza and Leibniz. He is Badiou and Meillassoux's great precursor; he is an object-oriented ontologist *avant la lettre.* What Marx talks about when he talks about things—not just commodities, as we have seen—is a world of reasons sufficient and determined in the last instance. Beyond the syntactical mechanics we have just seen, Marx's thought-image works conceptually on the condition that something bear the name "table" across these transformations, grammatical as well as conceptual, historical. A term, "table," is used to designate an object rigidly, for all possible transformations in different worlds: it is an object-of-thought that works much as a proper name will do, and in this way, inasmuch as it is identical in itself across any number of worlds in which it might *mean* something different it is, Badiou might have Plato say, ideal and subsisting. (It will be the task of my closing chapter on "Uncountable Matters" to present more explicitly the steps of this idealization of the proper name, and to give a sense of its critical limits.) No actually existing table, no instance of the concept "table," need be presented: the term "unicorn," or the name "Venus," will serve the same function, whether such animals, gods, or planets exist or not; so will the letters that form the word "table," rearranged so as to present nothing but the arithmetic form of a string; so will any letter, call it a variable, that might stand in for that collection of letters. About such a "table," nothing may be said, nothing predicated; it is nothing other than the necessity of designability, and in this sense it is even something other than a haecceity. The reality of this "table" is analytic: a table is a table, or "table" is "table," and the form of these two propositions, one concerning a real-world object and the other concerning a token or a mental object, is identical. Translation can occur between table and "table" on the condition that this formal identity is secure.

But still, Marx's argument says, one has to explain why the particular set of determinations—predicabilia—that I have listed as notoriously affecting this "table" are predicated of it, over time. (These, and others, in a map that changes with our use.) Marx uses the language of theology and mystery to describe the emergence of the strange sociality of the commodity—but he is in fact transferring that language from another spot in his argument, a place in which the ontological status of this object is being negotiated. For Marx's table is not just *any* table, of course. (Or rather, it *is* just any table, as should be clear, clear to the senses, and as Marx has been telling us all along. We know, we remember, that he is also suggesting to us that *this* table is something more as well—that it carries the over-sense, the *übersinnlich* form of something else, the commodity form. This is the most primitive sense of the economic.

But it is also, we now see, a direct assault on the principle of identity: a table is not a table; "table" is not table. Is the table's not-being-a-table a surplus value, however minimal, that attaches as well to the object, an indiscernible difference, an ontological minimum?) This ontological *minimum* steps forth into *Capital*'s argument from two neighboring, if contradictory, domains. The notion's philosophical genealogy is, as Helmut Reichelt has maintained, Hegelian—a more or less direct engagement (Epicurus may intervene) with sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Marx's table carries an additional mark, however: the expression *sinnliche übersinnliche* comes from Goethe's *Faust* (Mephistopheles steps forth, *tritt auf,* and says to Faust, about Margarete: "You sensual wooer, beyond the sensual,/A Magdalen leads you by the nose, I see" (Du übersinnlicher sinnlicher Freier,/Ein Mägdelein nasführet dich [1.16, 3235–36]).[33] At work here, then, are the specters of a philosophical and a literary tradition to which the text of *Capital* is paying homage, from which it is drawing, and to which it refers for the enlightenment or amusement of its readers. That such allusive specters add a surplus of sense—*Sinn*—to the argument is unquestionable; that this surplus sense is the formal analogue, the *translation,* of the mysterious surplus that the example-table acquires when it steps forth as a commodity, in Marx's scheme, is more than likely. Remark the repetition of the word *Sinn* in the passage. We first hear that the apodictic assertion that "a table is just a table," *ist sinnenklar* (a phrase Marx adds in later German editions in place of the original "[there is] nothing mysterious whatsoever" (es liegt absolut nichts rätselhaftes darin), badly translated by Moore and Aveling as "clear as noon-day," presumably from a misreading of *sinnenklar* as *Sonnenklar.* We hear that the table is "ein ordinäres sinnliches Ding," an everyday, inconsequential thing like a mug or a table; and that the transformed object is, in contrast, "ein sinnlich übersinnliches Ding," a thing or an object shining with the light of a floating wick, or bearing a script that changes it from an ordinary household object entirely consumed by its *present,* into a "present," adding to the surplus function of the lamp the cultural or psychic surplus value of the souvenir, or the curio, or as in *Capital*'s table, the surplus value of a reference to the literary canon or the philosophical one. The last two uses of *Sinn* refer to the table—first wooden, ordinary, meaningless, then animated, mysteriously inhabited by the commodity form, or led by the nose as a lover is by a Magdalen into that numinous world, or lit from within by the flame of surplus value. And the first, *Es ist sinnenklar,* refers, impersonally, metalinguistically, to the argument that brings together the ordinary table and its corresponding commodity form, and to the argument's readers—it is clear, clear as the sun, clear to the senses that the argument, this argument concerning the commodity-form,

and this table-example, are clear to your senses, to the reader's senses. You would be correct to detect here an iteration of the tripartite division of "objects" on which we began—the material object, the mental object, their relation or relating. And yet here, at this point, at the point of maximum inflection in the arc of *Capital* and in the arc of *Capital's* cultural reception, just *what Capital*'s table gains from these spectral senses, what indiscernible differential or minimum it gains to distinguish it from the ordinary material table—this is far from clear.

Here, as in our translations of *Bleak House*, a translational principle wars with the principle of sufficiency, and with the principle of identity—and this "war" is indicated and introduced in the mistranslation I just remarked of the first, impersonal, metalinguistic, use of *Sinn* as *sinnenklar,* its translation by "clear as noon-day." *Sinn* covers the semantic registers of "physical sense" (taste, touch, sight, sound, smell) and of meaning, *Sinn,* much as the English "sense" does. Marx is referring, through the hidden citation from Goethe and his engagement with Hegel, to both—to the sensualist Faust, goaded by Mephistopheles; and to the merely sensual immediacy of the introductory pages of Hegel's *Phenomenology.* But here the transformation of a "table" into something more or other than a table as well takes place because what makes that surplus of sense, *Sinn,* is not something that pertains to the senses, *Sinn*. It is because "sense," *Sinn*, is at the same time "a sense" *and* that which, not pertaining to the physical senses, nevertheless makes in the sensible a surplus sense that is not of the order of the senses, that the "mysterious" dance of the object, of the mere table, gets under way, in *Capital* and in its legacies. In this regard, then, the symptomatic mistranslation of *sinnenklar* as "clear as noon-day" does better *critical* work than Marx's text itself; it is, *as an error,* more accurate than *Capital*, or than the neutral English translation "perfectly clear" or "entirely clear." But the felicity of error is not the whole of the matter (nor is it unexpected: we may find in Jorge Luis Borges, in Walter Benjamin, in Freud, in Paul de Man not dissimilar observations). The antinomy of necrophilology, if we wanted to imagine it by analogy to the formulation in Nietzsche's "We Philologists," consists in this: that the time of what Adorno calls "the long, contemplative look . . . that fully discloses people and things [*Dinge*]," the time in which we assess, value, or seek to understand this or that object is never closed. No more than is the object itself—spatially, conceptually, as a token in a system itself subject to translation. "This or that object" can be a material object, a mental object, or the sort of object that speaks the relation between these two. It must be an object like the "we" I have just evoked; like a table, a mug; it must be a concept like "class" or "capital." A (further) translation, and hence a further

cleavage between the object's *sense* and *sense,* is always possible. After Marx, things necessarily suffer contingencies and possibilities that a further translation may disclose, eventual translations that block these defective objects from incorporation into every other similarly defective, incoherent object or subject. This passion is what we will call *materialism.*

A Brief Road Map

My chapters move through Marx's work and through the work of some of his readers—selectively, of course. I begin in Chapter 1, "On the Nature of Marx's Things," with Marx's early encounter with Lucretius's *De rerum natura,* when Marx prepared his dissertation. Lucretius's "acrobatic" verse impresses the young Marx, but what stays with him, forming what Althusser might have called a subterranean current within Marx's work, is the Roman poet's distinctive imbrication of things, *res,* with the matter of poetic expression, and with the expression of what comes to be called subjectivity. Over the course of Marx's career, the contingent logic that underwrites Lucretius's conception of this dynamic imbrication settles into Marx's treatment of objects generally, of proper names, and of identities. *Capital,* and capital, produce objects: what these objects are; how they dissolve classical, even dialectical models of identity; what analytic frameworks they command—these are the subjects I treat in Chapter 2, on "*Capital*, Catastrophe: Marx's 'Dynamic Objects.'" Here it is Marx's critique of the logical form of classical political economy's statements ("the identity of consumption and production") that first interests me. The range of names and objects and of disciplines that support them, providing them conditions of intelligibility and subsistence and taking from them coherence and legitimacy, hangs on two names, and on the mixed and contradictory sorts and principles of identity that attach historically to them: Marx and Spinoza. In the chapter that follows, on "Necrophilology," I treat the problem of equivalence posed in Marx's theory of value. I focus on the ontological contingency at the core of the concept of general equivalence: that because any object, produced by human labor or naturally occuring, may reveal itself over the course of time to be value-carrying, and thus to work like and as a commodity, *any object* at hand may step, according to laws not given in the object and not given necessarily, into the role of commodity, and thence into the sovereign role of general equivalent. Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," written from the center of what would become global capital, Wall Street; and Borges's translation, "Bartleby, el escribiente," help me show how this contingent determination shifts the question of abstraction on which Marx's

analysis of equivalence turns toward the figure and dynamics of translation. That Melville's strange object—Bartleby: a man of no value, "waste," but also the exemplar of humanity—forms the internal limit of the concepts of equity and cognitive capitalism makes the story of Wall Street into the story of "humanity," the insistence of whatever-commodity translated into the general form of value, of whatever-scrivener translated into the chronicle of modern subjectivity and subjection.

"Modern" in this usage seems a troubled term—or at any rate a term intelligible in three different historical frames. In the first place, Marx's analysis of the contingent foundations of objects' value and identities' coherence cannot be other than modern, that is, other than consequent upon the development of the forms of valuation, extraction, production, and consumption that *Capital* analyzes as distinctly related to the capitalist mode of production. But in the second place, Marx's (and Melville's) claims for the "modernity" of the critique of the intrinsic form of value are broader: they concern the coherence of the *concept* of identity—without restricting its purview to the epoch of capitalist modes of relation. And in the third place, and more important, both arguments, those directed at capitalism's historical moment and those made in the service of a broader concept of identity, are to be understood mediately—not just as sources for but also as products of *contemporary* historical and discursive frames. (Melville's story of Wall Street is "modernized" in HSBC's capture of global equities: absolute difference, pure "waste," creates and becomes value.)

Part 2 of *On the Nature of Marx's Things* takes up this "mediate" form of understanding the things that Marx's work makes for us. In Chapter 4, "The Primal Scenes of Political Theology," I show how the correlative concepts of dynamic object (Chapters 1 and 2) and of contingent abstraction (Chapter 3) that we find in Marx take shape in their principal contemporary mediation, that is, in Freud's far-reaching suggestion that the "I"—a principle of identity, of subjectivity, of project and intention, and so on—arises at the point of conflict and contact of sovereignty and the unconscious. "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden," Freud famously wrote—a phrase derived, the chapter suggests, from Schiller's response to an earlier form of political theology. Chapter 5, "Adorno and the Humanist Dialectic," puts in relation what I refer to as Marx's "dynamic objects" and what Adorno calls the "dialectical image." I take the language of *exile*—pushed to an extreme philosophical consequence in Adorno's writing—to provide a definitive rearticulation of the notion of "dialectics," and so too of the way we should understand, today, how objects (conceptual, material) and identities are produced, shaped, valued, and brought into and out of (political, economic) relation. The book's

concluding chapter, "Uncountable Matters," seeks to show how the most consequential contemporary critiques of mediation—found in the work of Meillassoux and Badiou—reinstall a form of species-humanism under cover of a procedure of mathematical abstraction that Marx (and Melville) have already put in question, as I suggested in Chapter 3. Here—and returning to the distinctive imbrication of *things* with the matter of *poetic expression* and with the expression of what comes to be called *subjectivity* that so captivates Marx about Lucretius's poem—it is John Donne, Pablo Neruda, and again Freud who provide us with a contemporary account of de-theologized fetishism on which to build a critico-political project in the wake of Marx's writing.

Part I. Necrophilologies

1. On the Nature of Marx's Things

> This *potestas*, this *declinare* is the defiance, the headstrongness of the atom, the *quiddam in pectore* of the atom; it does not characterize its relationship to the world as the relationship of the fragmented and mechanical world to the single individual.
>
> As Zeus grew up to the tumultuous war dances of the Curetes, so here the world takes shape to the ringing war games of the atoms.
>
> Lucretius is the genuine Roman epic poet, for he sings the substance of the Roman spirit.
>
> (Diese *potestas*, dies *declinare* ist der Trotz, die Halsstarrigkeit des Atoms, das *quiddam in pectore* desselben, sie bezeichnet nicht ihr Verhältnis zur Welt, wie das Verhältnis der entzweigebrochnen, mechanischen Welt zum einzelnen Individuum.
>
> Wie Zeus unter den tosenden Waffentänzen der Kureten aufwuchs, so hier die Welt unter dem klingenden Kampfspiel der Atome.
>
> Lukrez ist der echt römischer Heldendichter, denn er besingt der Substanz des römischen Geistes.)
>
> —Karl Marx, *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy* IV

"It goes without saying that but little use can be made of Lucretius" (Es versteht sich, dass Lucretius nur wenig benutzt werden kann).[1] So, by way of preface or prophylaxis, opens the fourth of Karl Marx's *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy,* composed around 1839 as Marx was preparing his doctoral dissertation. A long list of citations from *De rerum natura* follows, and then Lucretius is put to use—as Plutarch's antagonist, in the long battle over the Epicurean tradition. In these early, informal notes by a young dissertator, the reception of Lucretius hangs in the balance; what Althusser refers to as an "underground current" of the materialism of the encounter surfaces and is soon, over the course of the next fifteen years, rechanneled or resubmerged.[2] An account of mediation at odds with the mechanics, the economics, of *use* presents itself here, to be translated, never entirely successfully, first into the great Hegelian lexicon that the young Marx and his preceptors were unfolding, then into the languages of political economy. What sorts of use can be made of a thing? In what respect is Lucretius something to be *used*?

This is how Marx puts it:

> As nature in spring lays herself bare and, as though conscious of victory, displays all her charm, whereas in winter she covers up her shame and nakedness with snow and ice, so Lucretius, fresh, keen, poetic master of the world, differs from Plutarch, who covers his paltry ego [his "small 'I'": *sein kleines Ich*] with the snow and ice of morality. When we see an individual anxiously buttoned-up and clinging into himself, we involuntarily clutch at coat and clasp, make sure that we are still there, as if afraid to lose ourselves. But at the glimpse [*Anblick*] of an intrepid acrobat we forget ourselves, feel ourselves raised [*erhaben*] out of our own skins like universal forces [*allgemeine Mächte*] and breathe more fearlessly. Who is it that feels in the more moral [*sittlich*] and free state of mind—he who has just come out of Plutarch's classroom, reflecting on how unjust it is that the good should lose with life the fruit of their life, or he who sees eternity fulfilled, hears the bold thundering song of Lucretius?

These are marvelous lines—rich and complex, evocative, precise. Marx's enthusiasm for Lucretius's "bold," "acrobatic" verse, for the "infinitely more philosophical" interpretation of Epicurus he offers than we find in the wintry Plutarch—this shines through. We admire the "poetic master of the world"; we "forget ourselves"; at the glimpse of Lucretius's verse what was "small" about our "I" is forgotten and expands to fill the vertiginous air below the acrobat. Lucretius's verse dances dangerously above the world of things, Marx says: here, at this circle, standing as it were by the seaside, Marx describes not (as Lucretius does in the poem) a vessel's catastrophe but a world of things and states of affairs, and a world above it, a world of poetic turns and propositions made philosophically as well as poetically, concerning and corresponding to that world of states of affairs and things. How will Marx make use of Lucretius, use of a discursive realm whose figures turn in paths parallel to the wintry tracks of things below, enskied things above in correspondence with those below, some force drawing them together, the poet's art pulling them apart; gravity (or whatever norm "gravity" stands for here: let's call it "reference," or "correspondence," or "continuity," or the rule of "parallelism," always bearing in mind that each of these terms works in its own lexical-philosophical frame, as well as in relation to the other terms here), "gravity" threatening always to plunge the acrobat, or the poet, or the Lucretian philosopher, from the air in which he or she spins toward things below?[3]

One answer to this question is obvious enough. On reading Lucretius, Marx seems licensed by the vigor and intelligence of the poet's verse to spread his own literary wings and to treat himself to climatological antitheses, mythologies, analogies, anthropomorphisms, and epic similes: "As

nature in spring lays herself bare," he writes, "and, as though conscious of victory, displays all her charm, whereas in winter she covers up her shame and nakedness with snow and ice, so Lucretius, fresh, keen, poetic master of the world, differs from Plutarch." Marx trots out a small stable of poetical and rhetorical tricks that echo the invocation of Venus at the opening of *De rerum natura,* where the *Aeneadum genetrix* is said to be acclaimed by nature "simul ac species patefactast verna diei" (as soon as the vernal face of day is made manifest).[4] But these lines express also a degree of anxiety. The acrobatic thrill of flying with Lucretius, of catching a glimpse of nature's ravishing and seductive nakedness, of forgetting ourselves—all these mark the philosophically familiar experience of feeling upraised, *erhaben,* sublimated. For this early Marx, to read Lucretius is to come across that which elevates-exposes us and threatens us with a loss of self that is correlative to the expansion of our "small I" into the space between the acrobat and the ground, between the world of poetic figures and the wintry ground of things. We may feel "like" universal forces when we come across Lucretius's verse, but only when we have forgotten that we *are not*; spring's victory always slips into winter's grasp, and back out again. We purchase a certain sort of moral disposition—*Sittlichkeit*—and a feeling of increased freedom on the coin of this sublime and sublimating exposure, and on the back of a necessary forgetting that is brought about by Lucretius's boldness. Just what sort of moral disposition this is, and just what sort of freedom is contingent upon sublime forgetting, and what, beyond our "small I" and "paltry egos," we must forget in order to achieve a free moral disposition—these questions are themselves momentarily forgotten, in the thrill of Lucretius's victory over Plutarch.

But only momentarily, and never entirely. Manifestly, Marx approaches *De rerum natura* in the epic-poetic mode that Lucretius's verse puts at his disposal, but also through or against the elevating, sublimating lexicon of Kantian aesthetics—among others. At this level, "forgetting" does not obtain. Marx's readers—and, as these lines are private notes, intended for Marx's own use alone, the only "reader" of interest here is Marx himself—Marx's readers, Marx himself, are invited to recall the artifice of Lucretius's verse and the long tradition, epic as well as philosophical, that it engages. At "the glimpse [*Anblick*] of an intrepid acrobat," then, we may well "forget ourselves," but at the glimpse of Marx's summary account of the experience of reading Lucretius we recall that when we then, and consequently, "feel ourselves raised [*erhaben*] out of our own skins like universal forces [*allgemeine Mächte*] and breathe more fearlessly," we are rejoining an aesthetic tradition, and a tradition of writing about aesthetics, that places us in our own skin again, wraps us back into a philosophical surface on which the lexicon of

our experience is detailed. Here, in short, the determining laws of mediation draw Marx the reader toward Marx the writer of these notebooks, just as the epic simile with which Marx opens this notebook draws him into analogy with the epic poem of nature itself, draws Marx into contact with Lucretius. Here, then, the philosopher's "small I" coincides with itself, as the writer of these notebooks coincides with their reader, when it glimpses itself in the shape of the Roman poet, in the skin of the Kantian aesthetician, who people the element in which the dance of poetical figures and of philosophical propositions corresponds, mediately, to the world of things and states of affairs.

If this sounds rather imprecise, it is because Marx is treading on very tricky ground indeed. Marx is careful to leave the "glimpse" that Lucretius affords him at just that—a glimpse. The domain of the acrobat (*Luftspringer* is the wonderful word Marx uses: the air-jumper) remains the pastoral world of the circus, set aside from the humdrum, workaday world in the same way that the sublime experience serves more as an interruption, an epochal punctuation, than a part of the fabric of our "paltry" lives. Spring, the appearance of Venus, the reading of Lucretius's poem, these are radically heterogenous with respect to the wintry, encloaked body of the paltry I, the world where the mere "usefulness" of one or another experience is the measure of its worth—for example, the "experience" of reading Lucretius. And vice versa; my glimpse of the acrobat is nothing at all like the way I see the shivering, Plutarchan moralist, the acrobat, as different from Plutarch as spring's female charms are from winter's harsh grasp. But the circus and the sublime landscape are also inextricably connected with the world from which they escape. Even Marx's strange analogies tell us as much: nature remains the same—same in name, same in continuous substance—beneath the exposure of her springtime victory or the huddled mantle of winter; I may forget myself on glimpsing the acrobat, but I gaze at him with the same eye that has seen the shivering Plutarch. Lucretius's verse is at one and the same time "of little use" in understanding the difference between the Democritean and Epicurean systems, and is indispensable, inasmuch as it provides the point at which I, Marx-the-writer and I, Marx-the-reader, coincide, where the forgetting that Marx-the-writer demands shows itself to be correlative to the remembering that Marx-the-reader exemplifies. Winter and spring, the flight of the acrobat and the pedestrian tread of the schoolteacher: these are accidents of nature or of the "small I" or the "paltry ego," mere *eventa,* circumstantial and disseverable properties; and they are also *coniuncta,* nonseverable and constitutive properties "which without destructive dissolution can never be separate or disjoined" from substances,

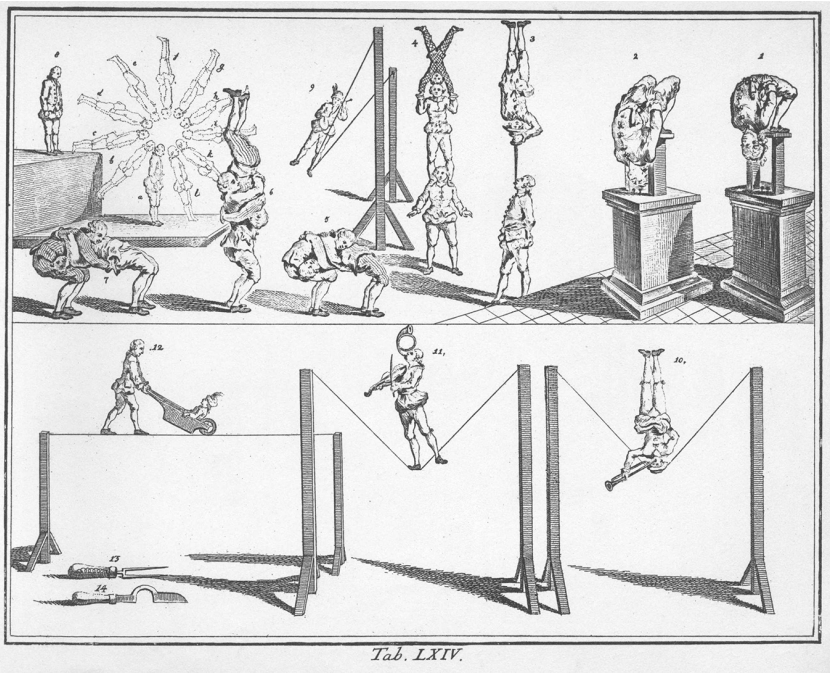


Figure 3. "Luftspringer," in *J. B. Basedows Elementarwerk mit den Kupfertafeln Chodowieckis u.a.* Kritische Bearbeitung, vol. 3, ed. von Theodor Fritzsch (Leipzig: Ernst Wiegand, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chodowiecki_Basedow_Tafel_64.jpg.

"id quod nusquam sine permitiali discidio potis," in the words of the poem (book 1, l. 451). The world of things and the world of statements about things remain correspondent, parallel, symmetrical; and they lean in, collapse, fall, decline into one another.

One imagines as a result two destinies, two uses, for Lucretius, encoded in these letters that the young Marx sends to himself, in these notebooks in which he sketches for himself the outlines of the Epicurean tradition. These uses, these destinies for Lucretius set the pattern to which Marx will make other forms of thought conform. On the one hand, we imagine a line of thinking stressing the sublime, indeed unbreachable, difference between the world of things and the lofty, *Luftig* world of statements about things. The acrobatic figures of *De rerum natura* are, on this description, the epitome of what Marx will call, in the first of the "Theses on Feuerbach," "all hitherto existing materialism," inasmuch as in this circus world "the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*,

but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively."[5] In the "Theses," such Feuerbachian, excessively strong materialism leads to the *idealization* of "things" rather than to their being understood as the result of, or under the aspect of, practice. "Things" imagined as ob-jects, objects-for-consciousness or for thought, and in a specular and parallel determination, thought imagined as the contemplation of objects-for-thought alone; an adequation of thought to object-for-thought and vice versa; the pure, unthought immediacy of thought to itself. On the other hand, one imagines the collapse of the plane of figures onto that of "things." On this side, we find a materialism of a different sort—even of a different national lineage, an antimetaphysical, British materialism, a materialism of cases for which no figure is to be found. This Marx describes elsewhere, also quite famously, as Baconian, based in the senses, experimental, nominalist.[6] Things, on this side, imagined as for-themselves alone; the work of thought, producing hypotheses about things alone to be tested in the event; thought, an activity of a consciousness alone among things, a thing among other things; relation, which might be construed as an abstract figure corresponding to the plane of things in themselves, demoted, fallen to earth, a further thing among things; the pure, unthought immediacy of the thing to itself.

These two declensions of Marx's early encounter with Lucretius appear to mark the outside limits of Marx's thought on materialism, and in particular on the status of things in and for thought. (Are mental objects material? In what sense?) But already at this stage of Marx's career this description is inadequate—inadequate to Marx's understanding of things, inadequate to his reading of Lucretius.

Let me now turn to a third, decisive aspect to Marx's earliest encounters with Lucretius. Marx gives a fairly straightforward—though not for that less interesting—Hegelian account of *declinatio.* It begins by asserting that "The straight line, the simple direction, is the negation of immediate being-for-self, of the point; it is the negated point; the straight line is the being-otherwise of the point." Steps follow—Marx walks his reader, in summary form, through Lucretius's argument in book 2, insisting on the difference between what Marx calls the spatial law according to which atoms fall primitively, in parallel, and the different law, Marx's word in both cases is indeed *Gesetz,* followed by the declining or swerving atom. Concerning the first, the law of spatiality, the term that Marx uses to designate the subsisting path from which the atom swerves is *Voraussetzung,* the law or track that is laid out before the atom, the precondition or presupposition of its path, but with a strong play on the root, *Ge-setz*. That atoms follow the path that is presupposed or pre-posed, *Setzen,* for them, the path that is set-out-before-them, this is the law, *Gesetz,* of spatiality—indeed this is the definition of

space that Marx offers: the collection or set of paths-to-be-followed, in other words, the unfolding of what is set out as potentiality for the atom-in-motion. The term *Voraussetzung* preserves a foot in colloquial usage, but it also carries the more technical sense of a logical *premise* that we would expect of an argument or a note in which Marx "expresses" himself, as he says, "in terms of logic," or indeed of the *Logic*. For in these pages in which Marx discusses Lucretius he is not only adopting the lexicon of Kantian aesthetics, he is referring quite directly to the sections of G. W. F. Hegel's *Encyclopedia* and of the *Science of Logic* in which the concept of "Measure" is discussed, where, Hegel says in *Science of Logic,* "there is a sudden interruption of merely indifferent relations which do not alter the preceding specific reality or do not even form any such, and although the succession is continued quantitatively in the same manner, a specific relation breaks in *per saltum*."[7] It would take me too long to consider in detail the nature of this strange, early but far-reaching meeting of Lucretius with Hegel in Marx's notebooks, but it should be clear that for Marx there is a dramatic and informing line leading from Lucretian *declinatio* to Hegel's description of the "jump" from quantitative to qualitative relations, the seeming action-at-a-distance by means of which the quantitative relation makes the acrobatic jump into the qualitative, while also preserving-eliminating its mere quantitativity—thus giving rise to the dialectically more ample concept of measure. Hegel (who has in mind Georg Wilhelm Leibniz's account of what comes to be called the Principle of Continuity: *natura non facit saltum*, from the 1704 *Nouveaux essais*) describes these "jumps" as knots or nodes in otherwise straight number-lines or arithmetically sequential number-sets, and he has in mind something like the mathematics of recursive functions, which make manifest second-order relations among numbers in arithmetic series in which numbers seem to bear to each other exclusively what one might call first-order relations, relations that flow from their definition as quanta. Still, it should be clear as well that this dramatic and informing line leading from the *Luftspringer* Lucretius's account of *declinatio* to Hegel's account of the "jump" from quantitative to qualitative relations is importantly *discontinuous*. The persistent uncertainty of Lucretian *declinatio* is not of the same order as the retrospective understanding of the potentiality of other-than-arithmetic relations that we are afforded by the "jump" in order of relations that Hegel describes, a jump that is nothing but the law of the unfolding of the premises according to which quanta, or atomic propositions, establish themselves as such in relation to other such.

What, then, is Marx's purpose in passing Lucretius through Hegel, if to do so is to bend together into a seeming identity two merely parallel, merely analogous swerves or jumps?

Consider this brief, rather dense passage in which Marx describes the principle of atomic movement in *De rerum natura*:

> As the atom swerves away from its premise [*Wie das Atom von seiner Voraussetzung ausbeugt*], divests itself of its qualitative nature and therein shows that this divestment, this premiseless, contentless being-enclosed-in-self exists for itself, that thus its proper quality appears, so also the whole of the Epicurean philosophy swerves away from the premises; so pleasure, for example, is the swerving away from pain [*Schmerz*], consequently from the condition in which the atom appears as differentiated, as existing, burdened with non-being and premises. But the fact that pain exists, etc., that these premises from which it swerves away exist for the individual—this is its finiteness [*seine Endlichkeit*], and therein it is accidental. . . . One swerves away from determinism by elevating [*erhoben*] accident, necessity and arbitrariness to the level of the Law; God swerves away from the world, it is not for him, and therein he is God.
>
> (Wie das Atom von seiner Voraussetzung ausbeugt, seiner qualitativen Natur sich entzieht und darin nachweist, daß dies Entziehn, dieses voraussetzungslose, inhaltslose Insichbeschlossensein für es selbst ist, daß so seine eigentliche Qualität erscheint, so beugt die ganze epikureische Philosophie den Voraussetzungen aus, so ist z.B. die Lust bloß das Ausbeugen vom Schmerze, also dem Zustande, worin das Atom als ein differenziertes, daseiendes, mit einem Nichtsein und Voraussetzungen behaftetes erscheint. Daß der Schmerz aber ist etc., daß diese Voraussetzungen, denen ausgebeugt wird, sind für den einzelen, das ist seine Endlichkeit, und darin ist er zufällig. Zwar finden wir schon, daß an sich diese Voraussetzungen für das Atom sind, denn es beugte nicht der graden Linie aus, wenn sie nicht für es wäre. Aber dies liegt in der Stellung der epikureischen Philosophie, sie sucht das Voraussetzungslose in der Welt der substantialen Voraussetzung, oder logisch ausgedrückt, indem ihr das Fürsichsein das ausschließliche, unmittelbare Prinzip ist, so hat sie das Dasein sich unmittelbar gegenüber, sie hat es nicht logisch überwunden. . . . Dem Determinismus wird so ausgebeugt, indem der Zufall, die Notwendigkeit, indem die Willkür zum Gesetz erhoben wird; der Gott beugt der Welt aus, sie ist nicht für ihn, und drin ist er Gott.)[8]

This is a considerable reformulation both of the Lucretian passage upon which Marx is commenting, and of the Hegelian lexicon into which he is translating it. It becomes a crucial element in a number of ways. The link between pain and the law or premise from which the Epicurean pleasure principle is to swerve is not to be found in these terms in Hegel—not, at any rate, in the way that this "persistence" is imagined, as the finiteness of

the number or the unity of the number, as it were. This affect of the point, as it can be called, is at the same time an expression of its finiteness, that is, it designates the point as a point, it is the condition of its arithmetic, atomic relation-to-itself and also of its first-order relation-to-other-points; and also it is an expression of the in-itself-as-finite of the point. *Schmerz* is a swerving away from pain, and pain is the characteristic of the punctual rain of atoms. "Pain" is the term that Marx employs to express *both* the condition of uncertainty that in Lucretius forms the juncture of the four-part system, atom and motion, void and declination, *as well as* the condition of disclosable potentiality that characterizes the arithmetic relation in Hegel. Marx's term is, we might say, a compromise-formation, or a symptom.

Marx's symptomatic "pain" is useful on three additional levels. The first is conventional: using the concept of "pain" in this way, Marx swerves from the onto-epistemological level to the ethical one, and translates the atomic register at which he has been proceeding, the map of the actualization or the coming-together of the atoms according to the *declinatio*, into the consideration of the Epicurean freedom to choose pleasure over pain. Using "pain" in this way *also* allows Marx to import a lexicon that is of particular interest to him in these years, and which remains connected with his discussions of Epicurus for the next decade or so. This is Marx's description of *matter* in *The Holy Family*, his polemic, written toward the end of 1844 with Friedrich Engels, against the Young Hegelians:

> Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the principal forms of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in matter, motion is the first and foremost, not only in the form of mechanical and mathematical motion, but chiefly in the form of an impulse, a vital spirit, a tension—or a "Qual," to use a term of Jakob Böhme's—of matter. The primary forms of matter are the living, individualizing forces of being inherent in it and producing the distinctions between the species.
>
> (Unter den *der Materie* eingebornen Eigenschaften ist die *Bewegung* die erste und vorzüglichste, nicht nur als *mechanische* und *mathematische* Bewegung, sondern mehr noch als *Trieb, Lebensgeist, Spannkraft,* als *Qual* - um den Ausdruck Jakob Böhmes zu gebrauchen - der Materie. Die primitiven Formen der letztern sind lebendige, individualisierende, ihr inhärente, die spezifischen Unterschiede produzierende *Wesenskräfte.*)[9]

Böhme's *qual*, which means *cruciatus, tormentum,* as Grimm's dictionary tells us, stamps matter with a "force of being," a *Lebenskraft*: *Qual* is, Böhme tells us, "the mobility, boiling, springing and driving of a thing" (Qualität ist

die Beweglichkeit, Quallen oder Treiben eines Dinges, als da ist die Hitze, die brennet, verzehret und treibet alles, das in sie kommt, das nicht ihrer Eigenschaft ist).[10] This individuating *Lebenskraft* inheres in matter and supports the distinction between mechanical and mathematical movement. In Marx's physics, the primitive "force or might of being" is a form of suffering or torment proper to matter, and it is the condition upon which matter becomes mathematized and mechanized—*Qual* is the condition under which undifferentiated matter swerves, at uncertain times and in uncertain places, into differential relation, forming organized bodies; and it is the condition under which merely arithmetic relations "jump" into a qualitative relation, revealing an always-already operating law of measure retroactively.[11]

There is a third, remarkable aspect, rather subterranean, of Marx's approach to Lucretius in these lines. In the dense and poetic paragraph I have cited, in which Marx reads Lucretius through Kant, through Hegel, and now, we see, through Böhme, the language of the *swerve* takes on different, overdetermined, and symptomatic shapes and functions. Among these, the term and the little lexicon to which it is now associated come to describe a metaphilosophical maneuver in Marx's own writing—as when he uses the same, rather unusual word, *Ausbeugen*, to describe not only the swerving of the atoms, their *declinatio*, but also a significant swerve in the historiography of philosophy.[12] There is physical *declinatio*—the swerve of atomic *minima;* traditionally, though controversially, Epicureanism understands what we are accustomed to call the exercise of moral freedom on the model of *declinatio* as well, the individual's election of pleasure over pain not being given in advance but always only recognized after the fact as having occurred. Finally, for Marx the history of philosophy moves *per saltum,* according to *declinationes,* among schools and forms of thought appropriate to times and sets of thoughts or mentalities. Thus determinism is said to swerve into something else; Epicureanism moves suddenly away from the principle of pain, *Schmerz*, and toward pleasure. Hegel, in the sections of the *Logic* from which Marx is borrowing, makes a point not dissimilar from this when he speaks of the task of "the historian of philosophy," to whom, Hegel says, "it belongs to point out more precisely how far the gradual evolution of his theme coincides with, or swerves from, the dialectical unfolding of the pure logical Idea." The word that Hegel uses to designate this "swerving" is not *ausbeugen* but the rather different *abweichen* ("Während es nun der Geschichte der Philosophie überlassen bleibt, näher nachzuweisen, inwiefern die in derselben stattfindende Entfaltung ihres Inhalts mit der dialektischen Entfaltung der reinen logischen Idee einerseits übereinstimmt und andererseits von derselben abweicht"). The result of this repetition, on different levels,

of the lexicon of "swerving" and *declinatio* is to split the object of Marx's argument, or to double it: he is no longer writing about Lucretius alone but also about the uses to which Lucretius can be put—in, for instance, the history of philosophy, including in Marx's own contributions to that history. These are not, however, symmetrical objects or corresponding discourses, one mappable onto or translatable into the other according to an algorithm, a principle of abstraction, or an established lexicon; we are not dealing with the topographer's view of surfaces, with the Idealist philosopher's map of a numinous world of forms to which phenomena relate, or more generally with geometry, that late development of British materialism, as Marx has it in *The Holy Family*. The distinction between a discursive and a metadiscursive position is also susceptible of *declinatio*; a *Qual* internal to the discourse turns it metadiscursive, and vice versa. What sort of dialectic is in hand when we cannot establish firmly whether something is occurring on a discursive level or on a metadiscursive level—and thus what sort of finiteness is appropriate to the object, and which to the subject? This is the point, rather a sort of nodal crossing that occurs by virtue of *declinatio*, at which Marx the student of philosophy swerves from Hegel's path. Writing to himself, hoping to furnish himself with a professional identity, with a sublime perspective on his object of study and his subject matter, Marx shows himself that it is not possible to tell whether the nature of philosophical writing is to correspond to a world of things above which it floats, or to have these touch—any more than it is possible to tell whether the principle of correspondence is a principle of uncertainty or a principle that reveals the recursive law according to which writing and the world of things will, or may, touch. This uncertainty means that it is equally unclear at what points his own language is of the order of discourse or of the order of metadiscourse—that is, Marx shows himself that he does not know, and cannot firmly know, whether he, the "small I" or "paltry ego" writing these notebooks to himself, belongs to the order of things or to the order of statements concerning things, of the order of the acrobat who swings above them. Knowing that these two touch, but that they touch painfully both in uncertain times and places, and where the law of their touching reveals itself, as the force of gravity does only in the fall of the acrobat, the Luftspringer.

In this complex approach to the nature of things, and to his own nature as a thing, Marx proves himself an acute reader of Lucretius. Marx was especially struck at the almost Empedoclean strife that obtains in the poem at both levels, in its descriptions of the tormented or turbulent interaction of atomic *minima* in the cosmological as well as the physical sections, and in the verse-form itself. Martial analogies abound, of course; so does recourse

to the term *turba,* as a way of describing the violence of the sea as well as the small turbulence caused by *declinations* broadly.[13] This irreducibly *turbulent,* unexpected, and illocalizable aspect of Lucretian and Epicurean cosmology runs precisely against the affective or dispositional attitude to which the philosopher aspires, where the *suavitas* and equanimity of katastatic pleasure undergird the moral or ethical "small," "paltry I." The battle between Mars and Venus, in brief, is both the subject of *De rerum natura* and its abiding consequence: the philosopher is the ground on which that battle represents itself, and on which it is fought—or rather, the status of philosophical language, of philosophical statements about things in a world of things, is that battleground itself. Or rather, the philosophical *text* is this ground and battleground on which it is impossible to decide, for a class of predicates, whether they are accidental or nondisseverable properties of substances, and thus escape the bivalent logic that Lucretius seems on one level to require, when he says that all things that are named or called (*cluent*) must either be *eventa* or *coniuncta* of void and bodies, *inane* and *corpora.* Or to be even more precise, it is *at* the place, and *as* the place, where the philosophical text confronts the problem of its *use,* that this battle takes place.

When I say the "philosophical text," I am taking an obvious and notorious liberty. For it is just where Lucretius's great poem looks *least* like a classical "philosophical" text—like what has come to be called a "philosophical text," perhaps in an effort to evade what is most radical about a work like *De rerum natura*—which is to say precisely where the matter of how things are called or named, and in what sorts of matter this calling or naming takes place, that the problem of *use* arises formally. Tmeses, paronomasias, all sorts of anagrammatic devices that go into the so-called "alphabetical paradigm"—these are where the poem's *value* as a vehicle for the exposition of a philosophical doctrine is decided.

Take the lovely image of the motes of dust, the privileged "simulacrum et imago" that Lucretius recalls for Memmius at the opening of book 2 (2.116). The sun's rays show a great dance or battle of dust particles, just where we thought there was nothing. "You will see," W. H. D. Rouse's translation goes, "many minute particles mingling in many ways throughout the void" (multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso).[14] For Marx, these lines show that

> The formation of combinations of atoms, their repulsion and attraction, is a noisy affair. An uproarious contest, a hostile tension, constitutes the workshop and the smithy of the world. The world in the depths of whose heart there is such tumult, is torn within. . . . Even the sunbeam, falling on shady places, is an image of this eternal war.

> (Das Hervorgehn der Bildungen aus den Atomen, ihre Repulsion und Attraktion ist geräuschvoll. Ein lärmender Kampf, eine feindliche Spannung bildet die Werkstätte und Schmiedestätte der Welt. Die Welt ist im Innern zerrissen, in deren innerstem Herzen es so tumultuarisch zugeht. Selbst der Strahl der Sonne, der in die Schattenplätze fällt, ist ein Bild dieses ewigen Krieges.)[15]

"Lucretius," wrote Paul Friedländer about these lines some time ago, "has a queer inclination for the old-fashioned phrase *multis modis* or *multimodis*. . . . Not through the nature of the sound but through the associative force of alliteration do the *m*'s become for Lucretius a badge of the atoms." After listing other examples of the alliterative use of /*m*/, Friedländer concludes a delicate analysis of the sunbeam lines, remarking how Lucretius moves from the atomic /*m*/ toward "the unique and beautiful *concilia et discidiis exercita crebis,* the opposites *con-* and *dis-* joining with almost the identical root words *ciliis, cidiis* which by their very sound and rhythm tickle the ear as the motes glitter in the eye."[16] Friedländer's rather Baroque conceit (sound and rhythm tickling in the same way, or at the same time, in rhythm with, the glittering of sun-motes in the eye) might be rendered a little more formal, queered even further. In these verses, the remarkable alliteration of the /*m*/ in *multa minuta modis multis* meshes with the chiasm, *multa . . . multis, minuta . . . modis,* a formal dance that is crosshatched by the contradictory coupling of the two pairs of endings, which do not line up chiasmatically: *multa minuta,* whose *ta* ending contrasts with the doubled *is* ending of *modis multis.* This sort of lexical dance-and-polemic is supposed to instantiate, at the very smallest level, the great movement of thought that the passage paints for us: the analogy illuminates the movement of the atomic minima, and the component parts of the analogy, Lucretius's own poetic materials, reflect, capture, and repeat that movement. We read his verse: the sun's light picks out for us the parallel paths that letters take as they fall into order, into sense and out of it. This is indeed how Lucretius ends his description of the dust-mote analogy, saying, "So far as it goes, a small thing may give an analogy of great things, and show the tracks of knowledge" (dumtaxat rerum magnarum parva potest res exemplare dare et vestigia notitiai). The point is methodological (this is how we should read the poem: with an eye to the *formal*, even lexical iteration of thematic or semantic points vestigially made at the level of the verse's component elements; we should be what has come to be called *atomologists*) as well as philosophical (writing is subject to the same laws as nature—and vice versa), and it echoes Lucretius's methodological instruction to Memmius in book 1, "verum animo satis haec vestigia parva sagaci sunt, per quae possis cognoscere cetera tute" (for a keen-scented mind, these little tracks are enough to enable you to recognize the others [other proofs] for yourself).[17]

Lucretius's atomic alphabetism seems even to survive translation: "many minute particles mingling in many ways," writes Rouse; who would not admire the skill the translator shows in rendering Lucretius's alliteration?[18]

But matters immediately get ticklish. The hunting metaphor in these verses is carried through *De rerum natura* and speaks to the strange doubleness of the term *vestigium*, trace, footprint. The philosophical hunter finds his quarry, the truth, hidden from him, thanks to these *vestigia*. Lucretius follows the *vestigia signis* of Epicurus, at the beginning of book 3: the fundamental philosophical use of signs is then triple: the search for the truth, the imitation of the great model, the movement within the text from small to large. The use and *value* of poetic form lies in its practical enactment of this theory of the philosophical sign: an enactment that produces pleasure, *voluptas,* at the service of understanding, an enactment which leads from pleasure to contemplation, which flushes the truth from the thicket of false attachments and desires. Finally, the ability to track *vestigia* is what unites the philosophical text with the world of things: the poem carries the traces of the truth printed upon it as tracks are printed upon the earth, but also as motes swirl in the air, to be disclosed by slanted sunlight and attentive reading.

The term *vestigia,* however, as is already clear from these examples, is closely tied to two other circumstances, both of them threatening methodologically as well as conceptually. In the first place, *vestigia* are almost always also vestiges of certain sorts of violence. We saw the hunting metaphor; nowhere is the term the subject of greater pathetic investment than in book 2, where Lucretius unfolds the term with the greatest delicacy and precision. He is talking about the natural capacity—shared, he says, by "the race of men," *genus humanum*, with all other animals—to recognize differences, even within a *genus.*

> Often in front of the noble shrines of the gods a calf falls slain beside the incense-burning altars, breathing up a hot stream of blood from his own breast; but the mother bereaved wanders through the green glens, and seeks on the ground the prints marked by the cloven hooves, as she surveys all the regions . . . nor can tender willow-growths, and herbage growing rich in the dew . . . give delight to her mind and rebuff her sudden care, nor can the sight of other calves in the happy pastures divert her mind and lighten the load of care.
>
> (nam saepe ante deum vitulus delubra decora
> turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras
> sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen;
> at mater viridis saltus orbata peragrans

novit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,
omnia convisens oculis loca, si queat usquam
conspicere amissum fetum, completque querellis
frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit
ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuvenci.)

Vestigia, the traces that the truth leaves as it withdraws into the shelter of the thicket, the spoor followed by the active spirit, the minimal evidence left, in the material of the poetic work, of the philosophical argument it hides—these *vestigia* are (or can be) also traces of utter and irremediable loss, marks of the absence of what cannot have a substitute, that for which nothing will substitute, the utterly particular that draws our care as Narcissus does Echo's when she hopelessly follows him, "ubi Narcissum per devia rura vagantem vidit et incaluit, sequitur vestigia furtim."[19]

There is a second sense in which Lucretian *vestigia* hold a sort of methodological threat. Ovid again can help us to understand it when he describes in book 4 of the *Metamorphoses* the tracks of the wild beast, then the "thin cloaks" found by chance, first by the lioness that Thisbe flees, then by Pyramus, who "vestigia vidit in alto" (sees hanging in the tree these signs) of his beloved's death. Lucretius has not lost sight of this double function of *vestigia* in his construction of the *value* of his work. To dwell too long on the interrupted, anaphoric /*m*/ in the verse I cited, *multa minuta modis multis,* to attend with excessive care to the literal *vestigia* that truth leaves in the text, is to suffer the fate that Pyramus will suffer when he confuses the fate of the cloak with the fate of his beloved: one never escapes from the example, one is caught in contemplation of the "small things" and unable to reach the truth. *Not* to attend to such *vestigia*, however, means losing track of the occulted truth, or, in the lexicon that both Lucretius and Ovid employ, it means not *loving,* refusing the care of the unsubstitutable, not following the trace of the beloved, not spelling out the name of the friend or the patron in the letters of the work addressed to him. Here, for instance, a reader or a listener, Memmius for example, who hears in the anaphoric /*m*/ in *multa minuta modis multis* the echo of the many /m's/ in the name of the poem's addressee, Memmius, a reader or a listener who thus recognizes himself in the lexical *vestigia* of the poem, but cannot allow the pleasure of that recognition to arrest him there, to keep him attached to the mere echo of his name or to its mere lexical vestige, lest he suffer the fate of Ovid's characters, of Narcissus, for example. Here as in all things in this poem, a suddenly ungrounded criterion applies: to attend just enough, but not too much, to the *vestigia* literally left at the level of the letter throughout *De rerum*

natura. To take pleasure in the recognition of the pedagogical function of the work—but not too much. To see just enough of oneself in its *vestigia*, but not too much.

Just enough—but not too much. This is plainly unsatisfactory as a principle of interpretation just here: how, for instance, do we read Marx's own comments regarding the dust-motes—"Selbst der Strahl der Sonne, der in die Schattenplätze fällt, ist ein Bild dieses ewigen Krieges"? Is the repetition of the */s/* here another admirable case of *good* translation or good interpretation, inasmuch as it captures the repetition of the letter in Lucretius's original? Perhaps, but without also capturing the possible swerve of the letter toward the letters in the name of the poem's patron, Memmius—or toward the letter opening the name of the *Notebooks'* writer, a certain Marx. What criterion would we apply to ascertain whether a translation had or had not occurred, just here, literally?

Just enough—but not too much. The *via media* has some appeal in the domain of a certain Aristotelianism, in which measure, as μεσότης, applies to the moral virtues and vices by analogy to the quantitative measure to which mechanical forces are subject. The middle path is a weak but plausible description of an impoverished form of dialectical reasoning, in which a mean is set out in advance by the quantitative difference between the extremes that it negotiates.[20] In the latter case, "measure" is the resultant of a "jump" whose middle path is revealed as the premise, the preexisting potentiality of quanta and qualia as such. It is the path of Daedalus, of technology, of machine translation, of mediation that puts nature at the service of civilization.

But the middle path between the firmament and the ground, between discursive and metadiscursive elements, between things and their discursive correspondents, is not the path that Lucretius draws, and neither is it the one that Marx will slowly develop and follow slowly.

Let me return, in conclusion, and in order to suggest how Marx's early encounter with Lucretius will shape the nature of Marx's things, to his early remarks about Lucretius—that grand gesture of disavowal ("Es versteht sich, dass Lucretius nur wenig benutzt werden kann" [It goes without saying that but little use can be made of Lucretius]), the almost immediate use to which the philosopher is put. I am tempted to see here a sort of joke, if not a kind of performance: in and through Marx's reading, Marx tells us, and tells himself, Lucretius, the corpus of Lucretius's poem, the *interpretation* of the poem, will swerve just the slightest bit from what the understanding lays out before us as self-evident and self-understood, *sich verstehende*, the philosophical-poetic understanding of *De rerum natura,* the established understanding of the work. "Little use" can indeed be made of Lucretius by the "small I," a "small I" that

understands itself and what it lays out for itself in advance. (As if one said, "I, Karl Marx, am setting out for myself in these *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy* what was already given to me by the history of philosophy and what I am merely rediscovering—and I settle my identity, the small professional 'I' to be rendered me *by* the philosophical establishment, after I flush out from the thickets what I already know to be there, waiting, withdrawn, that 'thing' that philosophy already calls 'Lucretius.'") The "I" is "small" when the understanding understands itself, when it makes of itself the reflexive object to which it devotes itself, when the understanding follows the spoor of a truth it recognizes in advance, a truth the understanding already grasped, which has merely withdrawn for a time from the understanding. At this sight, as at the reading of Plutarch the moralist (but *not* of Lucretius the poet), as "When we see an individual anxiously buttoned-up and clinging into himself," Marx almost says, "we," the "small I," "involuntarily clutch at coat and clasp, make sure that we are still there, as if afraid to lose ourselves."

We can now be clearer on what this rather allegorical description might mean. For the earliest Marx the experience of "losing oneself" is simultaneously constitutive of thought, and Lucretian through and through. Lucretius is put to use in the *Notebooks* as *a way* of registering how the philosopher's "small I" or "paltry ego" fails to coincide with itself, how the writer of the notebooks swerves away from their reader, how the philosopher's "small I" fails to find what it expected as it tracks the *vestigia* of truth into the thickets, or finds what it did not expect, or finds something where it did not expect to find its quarry. We would be tempted to say that this failure expresses, in the affective register, a structural discontinuity—that neither the dance of poetical figures nor the march of philosophical propositions can be translated into or shown to correspond, however mediately, to the world of things and states of affairs. But this not correct, and not sufficient. Marx takes from his reading of Lucretius both the contingent dynamics of the poem (the register of *declinationes* that crosses theme and form in *De rerum natura*) and the poet's persistent figuration of matter, including the matter of his poetic expression, as a substance constituted in the first place by the *Qual* of this contingent dynamics. From where I stand I can look tropically down the avenues of Marx's career and observe the transformation, or the translation, of the *Qual* of contingent dynamics into the value-form of labor. Here too, or especially here, I will want to proceed carefully. I am at a circus again; at the glimpse of Marx's intrepid reading of Lucretius's poem I subject the principle of translation, translated this time *from* the domain where I have been tracking it *to* the historical, even bio-graphical level, I subject the principle of translation to the contingent dynamism that Marx takes from *De rerum natura*. I no longer

face, in Marx, even in Marx's name, the spurious choice between the speculative logic of self-recognition, and the hermetic isolation of language from the world of things. I note that Lucretius is put to use in Marx's *Notebooks* as a *thing* that at once registers and produces effects of translation, without becoming a regulative *principle* of translation (or an axiom of continuity, of correspondence, of identity). I conclude: Marx first glimpsed in Lucretius, in that contingently dynamic thing—"Lucretius"—that the poem affords him, literally and formally, the nature of things wrought and to be wrought, including that "I" he would fashion over the next forty years.

2. *Capital,* Catastrophe: Marx's "Dynamic Objects"

> An *index* is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant. Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not.
>
> . . . A sign which denotes a thing by forcing it upon the attention is called an *index*. An index does not describe the qualities of its object. An object, in so far as it is denoted by an index, having *thisness*, and distinguishing itself from other things by its continuous identity and forcefulness, but not by any distinguishing characters, may be called a *hecceity*.
>
> —Charles Sanders Peirce

> Le temps du monde fini commence. Le recensement général des ressources, la statistique de la main-d'œuvre, le développement des organes de relation se poursuivent. Quoi de plus remarquable et de plus important que cet inventaire, cette distribution et cet enchaînement des parties du globe ? Leurs effets sont déjà immenses. Une solidarité toute nouvelle, excessive et instantanée, entre les régions et les événements est la conséquence déjà très sensible de ce grand fait. Nous devons désormais rapporter tous les phénomènes politiques à cette condition universelle récente, chacun d'eux représentant une obéissance ou une résistance aux effets de ce bornage définitif et de cette dépendance de plus en plus étroite des agissements humains.
>
> —Paul Valéry

Here's a little scene.[1] The magnificent blue dome of the British Library's Round Reading Room; we picture Karl Marx at work on the *Grundrisse,* debating with David Ricardo's texts, mooching as usual on his wife Jenny's work and inheritance to live, rather miserably. It is late summer or early fall of 1857. He is trying to understand how to replace "the unimaginative fantasies of eighteenth-century romances à la *Robinson Crusoe*," fantasies in which *homo faber* is imagined as "the solitary and isolated hunter or fisherman," and which "serve[] Adam Smith and Ricardo as a starting point."[2] In place of

these "fantasies," Marx proposes a "point of departure" located in "individuals producing in a society, and hence the socially determined production of individuals."

This is the key step Marx takes in order to redescribe the primitive scene of production, which is also the primitive scene of the production of the discipline of political economy. Edenic: a fantastic scene, the library or the lost island or the state of nature, where the first names are first given to the things and objects and concepts that present themselves to the "individual"; where the difference between *what* one is called and what one *is* vanishes. But Eden is also a factory or a machine. Political economy as Marx imagines it produces concepts (like production, consumption, capital, surplus-value, and so on) and relations among these concepts, second-order objects such as the identity between production and consumption or the subsumption, in its different forms, of the labor process. These first- and second-order objects are in turn constitutive *of* disciplines (political economy is that form of intellectual labor that produces first- and second-order objects like production, consumption, and their relation). A discipline, call it the discipline of political economy, is a machine for producing and deciding upon the coherence, value, and relation among identities.

The "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy" provides us with a first definition of what a discipline is, and also a first sense of one of *Capital*'s eventual tasks. Marx will not only seek to displace political economy: he will also search for a way of understanding disciplines and their objects that does not rest on the tautologies—or, perhaps better, on the reflexive relations, or on the *autopoetics*—that underlie what he sees as the classic organization of fields of inquiry. A different definition, not only of fields of inquiry and the objects they produce but also of the means of production of those objects, will be required.

Like the figures, almost literary, that Marx calls "the political economists," we are accustomed to grant to disciplines their protocols and lexicons. We identify them as "disciplines" not only by the principles of coherence and the evidentiary paradigms they develop and employ but also by the rituals and practices engaged in by those who profess a discipline, to the general satisfaction and recognition of other practitioners or adepts. And not infrequently, a governing narrative or representation—mythic in one or another way—forms the third leg of this disciplinary tripod. We find, then, a discursive leg, consisting of a lexicon and a set of rules governing the application and transformations of that lexicon, as well as the protocols for assessing the value of whatever it is that the discipline produces; an anthropological leg consisting of an agreed upon and mutually recognizable set of practices

common to those who articulate the discourse, or in whom the discourse finds its articulation; and a set of self-representations, agreed upon general fictions about the origin and development, as well as the alternatives to, the setting of, and the possible decline or death of the discipline. What makes a discipline solid, autopoetic if not autotelic, is the topological articulation between these three "legs." Not only is none of these radically extrinsic to either of the other two, but each of these "legs" lies both within and without each of the others, serves both as the product and the condition of coherence of the other two "legs." A discipline's agreed upon fiction thus both tells the story of the origination of the discipline's discourse and practices, and is describable as the outcome of the transformations of that discourse; the agreed upon practices of the community include centrally the repetition and transformation or refunctionalization, on one or another level, of the discipline's self-representations, which then also work as a lexical item subject to the discipline's discursive rules—rules that are being enacted in the recognized practices that constitute the anthropological "leg" of the discipline.

This is a rather mechanical and a fairly well-known description of modern disciplinarity as a fundamentally autopoetic system, or an autopoetic machine. The term "autopoiesis," not to be found in Marx, of course, is intended to bear a modest weight in this context, and in any case I will be setting it aside in just a moment. The term derives from the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in the field of biology, but it may be more familiar today from the writing of systems theorists like Niklas Luhmann and his school. "Autopoietic systems" are autonomous, self-generating, and autotelic; they are to be contrasted with so-called "allopoetic systems" (the standard example is a factory); and one of their defining features is that they specify their own boundaries. Varela in particular devoted important pages to the epistemological impasses to which this feature leads: "A proper recognition of an autopoietic system as a unity requires that the observer perform an operation of distinction that defines the limits of the system in the same domain in which it specifies them through its autopoiesis. If this is not the case, he does not observe the autopoietic system as a unity, even though he may conceive it."[3] When I say that for Marx the "modern discipline" is a fundamentally autopoetic system, I'm noting the dynamic of topologically complex, mutually producing relations between discursive, anthropological, and representational fields that one finds in the modern academic-disciplinary field.

Say then that we ask after objects that *Capital* does not envision (or not, at any rate, under the current aspect of information-credit-debit-capital). I don't mean only particular commodities—objects valued and consumed

today, unimagined in the mid–nineteenth century. (We can supply an endless list of these.) I'm thinking also of second-order or conceptual objects: financialization; the commodification of credit-instruments; the super-valuation of *transaction*; abstract labor; *discipline,* as understood through the double lenses provided by the regime of the information-commodity, and of the "globalized" university system. We're proceeding unfairly in two ways.

In the first place, we're conflating the sorts of objects that can be produced in a factory or workshop, by a machine or a laboring person, for use and consumption, with sorts of "objects" produced, received, and used to all appearances immaterially, conceptual objects which gather together in abstract form or under a single general term whatever-objects, whatever-commodities, are produced as individuals in the factory or the workshop. (Simply recall, for now, that what appears to be a confusion of levels here, a provocation based in the merest analogy, is a definitive strategy in *Capital.* Central to the transition from the so-called "formal subsumption" of labor-value in the commodity-form, to the "real subsumption" of labor-value, is the double status of commodities, what Marx calls their "double determination" (commodities are *doppelt bestimmt*). Double determination consists in this: that the individual, autonomous commodity (*einzelne Ware*) is valued *both* as an element of capitalist production *and also,* inasmuch as it bears not just the costs of the labor actually expended in its production but also the "ideal," *ideell,* form of the value of labor, as the exemplary product and bearer [*Träger*], that is to say, as the *representative,* of capital itself. Marx writes, in the unpublished chapter 6 of *Capital,* part 1:

> We saw earlier that the commodity must acquire a double mode of existence in order to be made fit for circulation. Not only must it confront the buyer as an article with particular useful qualities, as a particular *use value* which satisfies particular needs, whether of individual or of productive consumption. Its exchange value must have acquired a *form* different and distinct from its use value, independent of it, although only notionally. It must *appear* as the unity of use value and exchange value, but at the same time it must appear as this duality. Its exchange value acquires this independent form, a form entirely independent of its use value, as the pure existence of materialised social labour time, in its *price*, that expression in which exchange value is expressed as exchange value, i.e. as *money*; and indeed it is expressed in this way in *money of account*. . . . The *commodity* now reveals itself as such—as the bearer of the total value of the capital + the surplus value, as opposed to the commodity which originally appeared to us as independent—as the *product of capital* in reality as the converted form of the capital which has now been valorized.[4]

The "double determination" of the commodity sets underway the properly capitalist mode of production: it is indeed the hallmark of that mode of production. However, since the possibility that a primitive commodity's value will be indexed to a general, abstract term—the general form of labor and, eventually, to the money-form—is immanent in the notion that commodities have use-values, Marx's argument is not exclusively historical.[5] "Use," "value," and "labor" are terms tied to concrete instances of production and are only understandable, usable, valuable, or workable, *relationally*, as part of a system of likenesses. We might say, in anticipation: the "analogy" between first-order and second-order "objects" in Marx's work shares a structure with the "double determination" of the commodity. The analogy linking Marx's logical objects and the concrete objects that *Capital* refers to works, like the commodity's "double determination," to coordinate the product's particular mode of being—a product of the capitalist mode of production—with its formal mode of being—as the general form of capital, and to describe this coordination both historically and structurally.)

We ask after objects that *Capital* does not envision, and we are being unfair, or imprecise, in a second way. What sort of machine can take account of what's to come? Even take account of the future history of its products' uses? Only a disciplinary machine at work under the aspect of a grander and encompassing machine, operating *sub specie aeternitatis*; or a machine whose products bear within them, immanent, the spell of their proper being, toward which they tend entelechically; or a machine at work when what's to come unfolds according to the same rules, produced by the same machinery and apt to come to foreseeably similar ends, as the rules we follow and as what we experience here and now. We can, accepting any of these descriptions, modify Marx's decision-system to account for objects it does not envision—more or less successfully, more or less violently, hewing with greater or lesser orthodoxy to the letter of the original (David Graeber, Thomas Piketty.) Or we can jettison *Capital* and follow capital's lead blindly, even headlessly. Or—a third way, neither revisionist nor eliminationist—we can pull apart the classic form of the discipline; show how *Capital* produces objects, things, and concepts unsuitable to the order and to the time of *any* decision system, and try those objects out against the objects produced by the regime of global information-credit. "Trying out" here bridges a number of quite different registers: a classically scientific, even positivist register (a hypothesis or a cluster of concepts is tested against the facts of the case); an activist register (put these "unsuitable" objects in place, as descriptions or as regulative principles, and assess the outcome; violence is entailed in the first moment); an aesthetic, even gastronomic register (what formal principles,

or principles of taste, are invoked, challenged, or suitably employed, when this "unsuitable" object is made to cover that unexpected body of facts and circumstances?).

My goal in this chapter is to show that *Capital* produces dynamic conceptual objects unsuitable to the order and to the time of *any* decision-system or discipline—including the decision-systems that *Capital* itself produces (the discipline of so-called Marxian economics, for instance). This is surely too strong a claim; it flirts with contradiction, perhaps unnecessarily. The order and time of *any* decision-system or discipline? How, outside the same grander and encompassing theological machines—under the aspect of eternity, or in time to the deadly repetition of mathematics—could I make such an argument? Only establishing an analytic contradiction between the dynamics of "unsuitable" objects that Marx's *Capital* produces and the concepts of decision-machine and of discipline, and between the historicity of such unsuitable objects and that offered by *Capital* and by capital, will suit.

I have a further goal. It's urgently important to understand *whether* Marx's decision-system produces, for us to sort out and understand, objects, things, or concepts familiar to us from the crises of the last decade—financialization, the commodification of credit-instruments, the super-valuation of *transaction*, abstract labor, debt. It's urgently important, but just on what level we are to proceed, and just *why* it is important, are trickier questions than would at first appear. Consider: do we not *already* register capitalism's unstable drive-to-expand constantly and far-reachingly? Are not our screens alive every moment with depictions of environmental degradation, of predatory state and nonstate actors, of wars whose economic bases are barely masked behind the familiar, old figures of "national interest," "stability," or "state creation," as well as less familiar but no less sinister ones—"preventive warfare," for instance? Paul Valéry's apocalyptic line from his 1931 *Regards sur le monde actuel* seems current: "The time of the finite, bounded world begins," he writes, in my translation, "... [and] we must henceforth relate all political phenomena to this universal, recent condition—each phenomenon representing obedience or resistance to the effects of this definitive bounding and of the increasingly tight dependence of human activities."

Capital is not much help here, where capital leaves its insular theoretical home and gets underway abroad, to be articulated with distinct political-administrative forms (colonialism, imperialism).[6] Prey to the anxieties of the present, we tell the *history* of capital's unstable economic expansion as if it were inextricable from the history of modern colonialism; we map capitalism's uneven expansion in different ways—upon the difference between resource-rich postcolonies and capital-rich postmetropolitan economies; upon the increasing concentration of wealth; upon the denationalization

of economic interests; on the track of the movement of labor from north to south, south to north; upon the reconstitution of information as a commodity; and so on. Finally, and perhaps most vividly, and certainly with the greatest consequences for our concept of politics, we register the phenomenon of capital's unstable drive-to-expand in the catastrophism, the apocalyptic tone of public speech (including, of course, Valéry's). Here we touch upon a still more perplexing matter: for the relation between catastrophism and the public sphere is more than accidental. The public sphere in contemporary, mediatized states is where the catastrophe is produced for social consumption, as the basis *of* what is social: in this sphere or in this discipline, the catastrophe-commodity is identical, at every moment of its production, with the social consumption of the catastrophe. What counts as "public speech" is determined as such in relation to the catastrophe the state guards us from: it's what we talk about with one another, when we speak as citizens, whether we know it or not; it's why we talk, as public subjects. The catastrophe that the state guards in itself to guard us from is definitive of our relation to one another: we recognize one another in the shadow of the catastrophe. It is the universal mediator, our general equivalent, the condition upon which our speech is mutually intelligible, the principle of universal translation.

So if we *already* register, in every sense, the catastrophe of capital's unstable, expansive drive, must that not mean that we are already disposed toward the world, and toward descriptions of the world, in other than narrowly or classically identitarian ways?

Manifestly not. Our registering capital's catastrophe in every sense *does indeed* entail an alternative disposition to classical identitarian thought. But without a positive account of its characteristics, of its degree of generality or generalizability, of the recognizable habits of thought and action that this alternative disposition entails, merely to register capital's catastrophe is worse than sterile: it is a way of borrowing social being and disciplinary perdurance from the eternity of the catastrophe of capital; of purchasing from the catastrophe a class identity protected from the vicissitudes of history; of finding a shelter that capital denies all but its most devout priests. This chapter, finally, hopes to provide an approach, a lexicon and a set of mechanisms, toward an account of the catastrophe of capital.

Object/Names

LOU: Have you got a first baseman on first?
BUD: Certainly!
LOU: Then who's playing first?

BUD: Absolutely!
LOU: When you pay off the first baseman every month, who gets the money?
BUD: Every dollar of it! And why not, the man's entitled to it.
LOU: Who is?
BUD: Yes.
LOU: So who gets it?
BUD: Why shouldn't he? Sometimes his wife comes down and collects it.
LOU: Who's wife?
BUD: Yes. After all, the man earns it.
LOU: Who does?
BUD: Absolutely.

Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, "Who's on First?"

KASPERL: Excuse me, who do I have the honor of addressing?
HERR MAULSCHMIDT: Mouthsmith. [*Maulschmidt.*]
KASPERL: Who are you?
HERR MAULSCHMIDT: Mouthsmith.
KASPERL: That amazes me, neighbor. Since when are mouths forged? I thought they were the sorts of things we mainly stuffed. [. . . *Seit wann werden denn Mäuler geschmiedet? Ich dachte, sie werden höchstens gestopft.*]
HERR MAULSCHMIDT: You lout! I'm not a mouthsmith, that's my *name.* [*Ich bin nicht Maulschmidt, ich heiße so.*]
KASPERL: Yes, neighbor, but I asked you who you are. [*Ich hab Sie doch halt gefragt, wer Sie sind.*]
HERR MAULSCHMIDT: You mean, *what* you are? [*Was Sie sind, meinen Sie?*]
KASPERL: What you are, who you are, it's bloody well pretty much the same to me. [*Was Sie sind, wer Sie sind, das kann man mir jetzt eh schon den Buckel lang rutschen.*]
HERR MAULSCHMIDT: Don't you even dare! I'm really a respectable person.

Walter Benjamin, *Radau um Kasperl: Hörspiel*[7]

The "starting point" given by the "unimaginative fictions" of bourgeois economics corresponds, in the idiom of the discipline of political economy, to a fantastical scene:

> Production is simultaneously consumption as well. It is consumption in a dual form—subjective and objective consumption. [Firstly] the individual, who develops his abilities producing expends them as well, using them up in the act of production, just as in natural procreation vital energy is consumed. Secondly, it is consumption of the means of production, which are used and used up

> and in part (as for instance fuel) are broken down into simpler components. It similarly involves consumption of raw material which is absorbed and does not retain its original shape and quality. The act of production itself is thus in all its phases also an act of consumption. The economists concede this. They call productive consumption both production that is simultaneously identical with consumption, and consumption which is directly concurrent with production. The identity of production and consumption amounts to Spinoza's proposition: *Determinatio est negatio*.[8]
>
> (Die Produktion ist unmittelbar auch Konsumtion. Doppelte Konsumtion, subjektive und objektive: das Individuum, das im Produzieren seine Fähigkeiten entwickelt, gibt sie auch aus, verzehrt sie im Akt der Produktion, ganz wie das natürliche Zeugen eine Konsumtion von Lebenskräften ist. Zweitens: Konsumtion der Produktionsmittel, die gebraucht und abgenutzt werden und zum Teil [wie z.B. bei der Feurung] in die allgemeinen Elemente wieder aufgelöst werden. Ebenso Konsumtion des Rohstoffs, der nicht in seiner natürlichen Gestalt und Beschaffenheit bleibt, die vielmehr aufgezehrt wird. Der Akt der Produktion selbst ist daher in allen seinen Momenten auch ein Akt der Konsumtion. Aber dies geben die Ökonomen zu. Die Produktion als unmittelbar identisch mit der Konsumtion, die Konsumtion als unmittelbar zusammenfallend mit der Produktion, nennen sie *produktive Konsumtion*. Diese Identität von Produktion und Konsumtion kommt hinaus auf Spinozas Satz: *Determinatio est negatio*.)[9]

Before asking whether this assertion of Marx's makes sense—before asking in what respects these two phrases come together, Marx's paraphrase of the foundational proposition of primitive economics on the one hand, and on the other "Spinoza's proposition: *Determinatio est negatio*"—note the three sorts of identity that run together in Marx's famous text, at obviously different levels of analysis: the identity of production and consumption in the portmanteau concept that classical economics calls, *nennt,* "productive consumption"; the identity of determination and negation; and—most mysteriously—the identity on which the relation between those two hangs. The first *kommt hinaus auf* the second, Marx writes, reticently: these two forms of identity "amount to" each other, they "come to about the same"—one usually says *das kommt auf dasselbe hinaus* or *auf eins* or *aufs Gleiche*. (The French translation, by Maximilien Rubel and Louis Evrard, reads "revient à."[10]) The identity that mediates and determines the relation, the *hinauskommen* of the first two; the identity apparently allowing these two forms of identity to be translated into one another: that of a certain "Spinoza."

Not all the names that *Capital* produces work as the ones in Walter Ben-

jamin's early radio play do—at the point where the name's "who" and its "what," its *wer* and its *was,* are identical, are identified, or name a new identity. But in Eden and for now, we're mouthsmiths; that's our identity, and let's take on the name as well. This is in part what Marx means when he refers to the *identity, Identität,* of consumption and production: for all three sorts of "identities," two dissimilar things, objects, or concepts are shown or made to be the same, *identisch,* and this new thing, object, or concept that they are is an identity, *Identität*.[11] From this point forward, from the mythic point at which this identity, call it *productive consumption,* is named, it stands forth distinct from each of its elements. Marx's *Identität* is, deeply and controversially, at the same time a process or a relating term and the name for the outcome of that process: in English, we would want to say that Marx's *Identität* means both the *identifying* (of consumption with production, or of "determination" with "negation," or of *Spinozas Satz* with the first two) *and* the singular result of that dynamic process, the object, concept, or thing we'd call a new and distinct "identity." An event, and a substance. What sort of thing is a name? (For instance, the name "productive consumption.") How do we go about *naming* a thing? Do "we" derive or borrow an identity, for instance a professional or a class identity, from the names "we" give things? From our *naming*? (Economists, *die Ökonomen*, are those subjects who can give the name "productive consumption" to this or that concept, corresponding to an abstract object and having some sort of real existence, and then take from that naming their "*thisness*," Peirce might say, their "distinctness" from other subjects: borrowing from *naming* and from the concept-object-thing named a "continuous identity and forcefulness.") The questions have a distinctly Scholastic ring in their more general form. The competition between the principle that "Res sunt consequentia nominum" (things are the result of names), and "nomina sunt consequentia rerum" (names result from things) is fought on pages and in halls from Justinian's time forward.

Remark what we stand to gain if we keep our names and our acts either happily separate, our "identities" at a distance from our "identifications," or decidably and perspicuously linked to one another ("identifying" this or that couple of concepts, things, objects, is what we do: it is our thing; our "identity")—in other words, what we gain by embracing a classic conception of identity, which allows us both alternatives. On our Edenic island the things we grasp by means of a name will remain to hand from one moment to the next. We will collect, for and about them, lists of qualities or of predicates; determine these to be definitive, or accidental; distinguish these things from others on the grounds that some possess, some do not, a minimal clutch of definitive qualities; defend the endurance or the perdurance of our things.

We will embrace, as a token of the strength of this classic conception of identity, the necessary circularity of our procedure: the things we handle are possessed of qualities and of a temporality we deem to be essential, but we identify these things in the first place as those-things-that-possess-these-qualities. The objects our discipline names will be identical-across-time; our discipline will borrow, from that identity-across-time, its own perdurance; as we will borrow from our discipline our "who" and our "what." By "things" we will mean an apple, or this table or that bale of cotton, or "Robinson Crusoe," but also such mental "things" as consumption, production, or "Diese Identität von Produktion und Konsumtion," or the primitive fantasy of an original, presocial *homo oeconomicus*. (Marx's list, as he considers the connection between venality, corruption, and the money-relation: "Since money is the transformed form [*verwandelte Gestalt*] of the commodity, one cannot see what it was that has been transformed into it—conscience, virginity, or potato," *Gewissen, Jungfernschaft oder Erdäpfel*.)[12] A classic conception of identity furnishes us with the self-evident, commonsense fantasy that a potato is, after all, a potato, and a *table* is a table, over time and to all effects. It provides us, step-by-step, essential quality aggregated to essential quality, with the fantasy of an eventual identity between species and social being. It lets us assert that the proper name "Spinoza" designates something or someone rigidly, the same thing, across all possible worlds, and would be unintelligible otherwise; and that whatever the name "Marx" designates across possible worlds can bear different descriptions and determinations in those worlds. (In some, "Marx" is the author of a work called *The Road to Serfdom*, for instance.)

Now remark what we lose. A classic conception of identity, as it concerns the objects or concepts that I call by general names ("a table," "a commodity"), or those objects that I call by proper names ("Marx," "Spinoza," and so on), or those as-yet-undetermined terms, not yet one or the other, those few, strange transitional objects I do not yet know how to designate, like "capital"—this classic conception of identity will require that I understand difference as something I can forget or hope to eliminate, an accident that supervenes upon a substance in its essence recognizable and at that level unvarying. When I refer, as Marx's text does, to "Diese Identität von Produktion und Konsumtion," I will have to mean not "*this* particular identity of two abstract terms" (are contingent identifications of this sort available, in any case, for abstract terms?), but the general "*the* identity of production and consumption" furnished by the standard English translation: the *indexicality* of identity propositions fades, and with it a specific sort of difference tied to the act and moment of enunciation, to the modal or verbal aspect of the phrase,

to my *identifying* this term with that, here and now, under modal aspects and in circumstances liable to change. Gathered into the quiet arms of the product, *Identität,* the messy, dynamic and differential textures of production and consumption are quieted at last. In the silence of the concept, it will be impossible for me to understand why capitalist economies are unstably driven to expand beyond the moment of productive consumption. If we rely upon this classic sense of identity, we will misunderstand, as pathological or aberrant, the persistence of "fantasy" ("unimaginative" or imaginative) in political economy. We will not recognize the relation between capital's unstable, expansive drive and the persistence of "fantasy." We gain a disciplinary identity, but the cost is too high: we lose the capacity to understand the contingency of the discipline's dynamic objects, and to recognize or build our own.

Marx then engages the old Scholastic struggle between the proposition that "Res sunt consequentia nominum" (things are the result of names) and the proposition that "nomina sunt consequentia rerum" (names result from things), not out of an interest in hoary debates between nominalist and realist philosophies (epistemologies, philosophies of language, even the different ontologies that line up under each banner) but polemically and out of an argumentative necessity.[13] Identity in *Capital* takes shape as a battle *against* what "the economists" mean by "identity" when they "die Produktion als unmittelbar identisch mit der Konsumtion, die Konsumtion als unmittelbar zusammenfallend mit der Produktion, nennen [. . .] produktive Konsumtion" (call productive consumption both production that is simultaneously identical with consumption, and consumption which is directly concurrent with production). As Marx describes it, the expression "productive consumption" *appears* to name something, some thing or some concept corresponding to the really-existing, immediate "identity" of production with consumption. Is what "productive consumption" names a thing, a concept, an object? Is it named in the same way as, and does it correspond to the object-thing-concept it names in the same way as, what classical economics calls "production" and "consumption"? Marx's point of entry into these questions is first philological, even grammatical (*Identität* works as a noun and as a verb form, a functional term, as we have seen)—but his argument quickly takes a specifically philosophical shape. The ghostly battle between nominalist and realist ontologies is joined again, and, translated by Marx across a number of registers (it is a philological question first, as we will see; epistemological, logical, even disciplinary, inasmuch as *Capital's* arguments bear not accidentally on the processes of production and valuation of *disciplinary* objects, the concepts "proper to" classic economics, or "proper to" the study of political

economy, or to the study of literature, philosophy, and so on), it forms the conceptual core of *Capital*'s critique of classic economics.

"Res sunt consequentia nominum" (things are the result of names), or "nomina sunt consequentia rerum" (names result from things). Note the asymmetries in the way that Marx rephrases the Scholastic conundrum: "The economists . . . call [*nennen*] productive consumption both production that is simultaneously identical with consumption, and consumption which is directly concurrent with production. The identity of production and consumption amounts to Spinoza's proposition: *Determinatio est negatio*" (Die Produktion als unmittelbar identisch mit der Konsumtion, die Konsumtion als unmittelbar zusammenfallend mit der Produktion, nennen sie *produktive Konsumtion*. Diese Identität von Produktion und Konsumtion kommt hinaus auf Spinozas Satz: *Determinatio est negatio*). We expect from Marx a balanced phrase to match the symmetry of the identity propositions "production is consumption and consumption is production," or *determinatio est negatio.* Instead we find this: "Die Produktion als unmittelbar identisch mit der Konsumtion, die Konsumtion als unmittelbar zusammenfallend mit der Produktion." Are the expressions "identical with" and "concurrent with," *zusammenfallend,* are they *identical*? synonymous? Surely not; only Marx's modifier, *unmittelbar,* is identical in the two phrases. The German *zusammenfallend* introduces the complicated modal expression *fallen,* which means approximately "to occur at once in time, this time, or a time, a *now*; to collapse; to coincide; to fall or befall; to fall together, someplace, call it *here*." (*Fall* is "a case," "what is the case"; and it is also what occurs when, for instance, atoms "senkrecht *fallen* im Leeren" (*fall* vertically through the void), as Karl Ludwig von Knebel's 1821 version translates Lucretius's "corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur / ponderibus propriis" (the first bodies are being carried [*feruntur*] straight downwards [*rectum*] by their own weight).[14] *Zufall* is an "accident"; *Zufälligkeit* is coincidence or contingency.) "Falls," in German or in English, occur; they are marks of contingency, of accident, of facticity; they are marks of the irreducible indexicality of names. A fall is the trace of the event of naming, *nennen*, in the name or the noun, *Name;* falls are ineffaceable marks of *hic et nunc.* A fall, inasmuch as it collects these elements—facticity, here-and-nowness, suddenness, contingency, accidentality; sudden descent, downturn; a fall is then always related to the *catastrophe.*

Statements about what *befalls*, then, about the catastrophe, are not of the same order as statements of identity such as "production is consumption" or *determinatio est negatio*; the conceptual object they name (do they?) is not the same, and they do not *name* in the same way (under the same conditions; to the same ends). One might be tempted to assert that the difference in the

name, or in the proposition regarding the name, is here the consequence of a difference internal to the thing it names (*consequentia rerum*: there is something about the thing named "productive consumption" that splits its name, its naming, into an assertoric and a modal shape, into "identity" or "logical necessity" on the one hand, and "coincidence" or "befalling" on the other; into rigid designation, for all possible worlds; and indexical signing). But we would be on equally good, or equally shaky, ground if we argued that the name "productive consumption" is constitutive of its object. The thing or concept or object that "productive consumption" names is the consequence of the name; it is brought into being by the primal act of naming, which *determines* its conceptual outline by bringing together "production" and "consumption" and by differentiating the new, portmanteau concept from the primitive terms "production" and "consumption." (An expression like "the primal act of naming," borrowed remotely from Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* or from the Edenic story that lies behind it and behind the "unimaginative fantasies" on which *Capital* begins, should be understood to name the material, disciplinary work of producing, putting into circulation, and defending a term.) *Res sunt consequentia nomen*: the name, "productive consumption," constitutes, from the material provided by the primitive terms it joins nominally, an aspectual object, an object-*als,* a thing-concept-object-*als,* this thing-*as.*

How would we decide, on what grounds, with what consequences for what we call our "world," whether an object-thing-concept *produces* a name, or vice versa? When the names are fairly esoteric ("productive consumption"), the object-thing-concept abstract, and their relation undecidable, the matter seems arcane indeed. Classical economics is, without being able to acknowledge it or take account of its consequences, undecidably both a realist and a nominalist discipline: an undecidable *als*-structure is constitutive of the names, objects, and their relations, in classical economics, and this is both the limitation of the discipline and its unacknowledged resource. *Capital,* however, takes on directly—and assumes as the condition of its analysis—the related clutch of undecidabilities that weaken classical political economy's understanding of its objects (of the things it treats, of the concepts it produces and works on). Realism and/or nominalism; an aspectual, indexical *als*-structure and/or an assertoric identity proposition; "Res sunt consequentia nominum" and/or "nomina sunt consequentia rerum." What these "and/or" tricks designate is not a contradiction, in the happy sense given the term in the Hegelian tradition. Marx's concepts, his second-order objects, are *defective* rather than contradictory—therein lies their precision, their flexibility, their analytic fruitfulness. *Labor, exchange-value, use-value,*

commodity; class terms like "proletariat"; functional terms like the verbs "to produce" and "to consume," or the nouns "production" and "consumption": what things, concepts, or objects these terms name, and *how* they name them, are matters decidable in only the weakest, most ephemeral sense. (The defectiveness of these concepts is sharpened when we realize that they work both on the level of the content Marx is engaged in understanding and on the level of the argument's conditions, where what is at issue is the *production* of the object-thing-concept from the name, or vice versa; and its *use* or *consumption* by readers of political economy.)

At the opening of the "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," this complicated, delicate dynamic takes shape in relation to a proper name. It is as though the entirety of Marx's argument regarding what will come to be called aspectual or indexical naming, and rigid designation; between the production of names from the objects they name or vice versa; regarding the possibility of imagining a discipline that falls outside the bounds of narcissism—it is as though all these took place under *als,* as or under the aspect of Baruch Spinoza's famous phrase (or rather, the famous phrase attributed, famously, to Spinoza), *determinatio est negatio. Spinozas Satz*: the possessive gives the phrase a local habitation and a name to match; it is, one might say, bidirectionally indexical. Reflexive: "Spinoza" is constituted by the phrase, the phrase by Spinoza; each determines the other; each *represents* the other. In this mutual determination, repetition (the repetition of two "identical" or "coincident" terms) passes for "negation." The concepts of classical political economy, Marx is saying, name things in this way. *Capital*'s concepts, however, will do other work. Not *representation,* but *force* or *power* or *becoming-ness*, *dynamis,* works them, a labor-power from which the common name, the names "laborer" or "worker," "producer" or "consumer," will flow, but which only exists in and as the *hic et nunc* of the laborer's work.[15] The thematic question of decidability—the decidable or undecidable relation between name, concept, and object—hangs on Marx's quite distinctive handling of indexicality.

What, for Marx, *is* an "index"? Are proper names indeed indices, in Marx's argument? Are they, as Charles Sanders Peirce puts it, "determined by [their] dynamic objects"?[16] Presumably Peirce means by "dynamic" both the general sense of the word (possessing and exercising power; capable of doing *work*; energetic; in motion), and the more restricted Aristotelian sense that attaches to the object's proper end: an entity is dynamic inasmuch as it is becoming what it tends to, its end. The two senses of the word do not, of course, easily fit together—the modifier "dynamic" and the noun it derives from in their common usage tending toward a dispersed activity

("That child is a dynamo!"), the terms in their technical sense much more restricted as concerns the investment, direction, motivation, and end of this activity (which is precisely *not* dispersed, but gathered into the *telos* of the object or identity dynamically becoming). In what sense is the object that determines an indexical sign *dynamic*? What sort of *work* is the determination, by the dynamic object, of the indexical sign that names it? This at any rate seems true: Marx envisions the work of determination, *bestimmen*, of the commodity (the "double determination" we have seen), of the indexical sign by the dynamic object and of the second-order objects that correspond to these determinations, as *falls*: representative cases, but also accidents and contingencies. Work is technical, directed toward production, dynamic in the Aristotelian sense, determinate; but it is also what is the case, what occurs by accident with results that do not correspond to ends: dynamic in the dispersed and chaotic sense we imagine informally. Work is a catastrophe, a fall.

Marx's early encounter with Lucretius echoes in this defective dynamic, just here, where *Capital* designates its objects, those common things proper to *Capital,* those things that capital makes *proper to* forms of thought, disciplines, and particular modes of production. Political economy's structural battles, struggles at least as consequential as those we witness on screen or take part in on the streets, take shape in and as *Capital's* fraught work determining the relations among its objects—its common nouns, proper names, and indices. ("Spinoza's phrase" is, remarkably, all three.) Names possessed in common, common property, concepts among concepts in a perspicuous and public system, translatable because the objects to which they refer stands in a generally recognized relation to a class. I refer to a mug, a potato, a table, a phrase, virginity, labor, a rose among other roses, conscience, and each one, ever so different from all the other roses, potatoes, virginities, and so on, is like every other inasmuch, and only inasmuch, as each individual I point to, here and now, can be converted into an abstract (Marx: the "ideal") form. (The Platonism of the money-form.) Proper names: privately possessed, even privatively; a relation of reciprocal constitution between the singular object designated, and the name: "Spinoza" (or "Marx") rigidly designates this object alone, and it is on this privative condition that we can say anything true, or false, about it—including asserting that a phrase truly *belongs to* "Spinoza" (or to "Marx"), or that "Marx" is the author of *Capital* in one possible world, and of *The Road to Serfdom* in another. Indices: what we might call common privatives: *this* mug or *this* table; *this* object in particular; *this* moment; *this* phrase, "Spinoza's phrase." *Capital*'s objects, and since *Capital,* the objects that capital constitutes *as* objects, take their defective shape and identities where Marx seeks to translate among these designation

conventions. *Capital*'s "system": simultaneously a designating and a translating machine. The work *Capital*'s system does: a fall.

The first of these characterizations of the identification machine in Marx can appear trivial: naturally *Capital* designates its objects, the concepts it is exploring. Naturally, some principle of translation or of generalizability is entailed in *Capital*'s project. *Capital*'s concepts (labor, value, the money-form) are sufficiently coherent and sufficiently distinct that they can be the subject of well-formed statements or phrases; to this very extent they are sufficiently independent of the circumstances of their enunciation to be translatable, between situations, disciplines, and lexicons. To say that production is identical to consumption is to say that the value of the product, the commodity, can be entirely expressed in and as its consumption, with no residue or defect; to say that Daniel Defoe's "unimaginative" fantasies can become eponyms, Robinsonades, and that they can thus describe states of affairs beyond Robinson Crusoe's island—for instance, the economic situations that Smith and Ricardo imagine—is only to say that works of fiction can be used allegorically across and among concrete, determined contexts (and also to suggest that better allegories for states of affairs can be supplied by other works).

This is not the sense in which translation and designation systematize and move the identification machine in Marx—it is not how *Capital* works, as we may already suspect when we consider, generally, the unequal *translatability* of common nouns, proper names, and indices. (How does one go about translating a proper name? Surely not in the same way—if it is even possible to imagine translating a proper name—as one would translate the term "table," or the expression "this table" or "this phrase, Spinoza's phrase, the one that I am citing.") However, before I tack into the work that Marx's machine does, a few strokes to suggest just how odd his machine must be. For any claim regarding the system of identities at work in these drafts of the *Grundrisse*—the claim that there *is* a system, whose shape and dynamics have yet to be described—will commit us, eventually, to a definition of "system," to defining the relation between "system" and "discipline" (a discipline in general, and in particular the nascent discipline of political economy, defined here against both classical economics and literary production), to judging the relation between *Capital* and this system or discipline, and to assessing the historical and conceptual constraints these definitions entail. Without this level of analysis, nothing we propose, no sentence we utter regarding Marx's argument, will be more than anecdotal, even (Louis Althusser might say) gastronomical. But matters are tricky already. For there is no immanent concept of system or of discipline on which to lean when we read these works

of Marx's, none that precedes the work that the identification machine does here and throughout *Capital.* Or rather—there are plenty: strong, coherent concepts of system, and of identity-within-system, that Marx has before him, from the natural sciences, philosophy, mathematics, religion, politics. *Capital,* however, is not only a critique of political economy: it is an effort to articulate a concept of system, and hence a concept of systemic or systematic identity, that is not based in the reflexive, mutually constituting relation between instance and class. "Spinoza's phrase," inasmuch as it is *Spinoza's* phrase, inasmuch as the phrase is attached necessarily to *a* proper name, to *this* proper name, and inasmuch as it is also a common enough noun, a common enough property to circulate namelessly as a coin in the conceptual economy of the mid–nineteenth century, provides Marx with the discursive register, with the defective concept of system and the correspondingly defective system of concepts, that will form the base of this articulation.

A Rose Is a Rose: First Moment: Production and Consumption

> But someone may object: the negation that has taken place in this case is not a real negation: I negate a grain of barley also when I grind it, an insect when I crush it underfoot, or the positive quantity *a* when I cancel it, and so on. Or I negate the sentence: the rose is a rose, when I say: the rose is not a rose; and what do I get if I then negate this negation and say: but after all the rose is a rose?—These objections are in fact the chief arguments put forward by the metaphysicians against dialectics, and they are wholly worthy of the narrow-mindedness of this mode of thought. Negation in dialectics does not mean simply saying no, or declaring that something does not exist, or destroying it in any way one likes. Long ago Spinoza said: *Omnis determinatio est negatio*—every limitation or determination is at the same time a negation.
>
> Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*

Let's start with what appears most evident in Marx's lines: the identity between the economic processes, or moments, that he is describing—the "identity of production and consumption."[17] The matter was of pressing concern in political economy in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and beyond the discipline as well: excessive or deficient production and excessive or deficient consumption spoke of moral or natural qualities, not only of habits or ephemeral dispositions.[18] Marx's own analysis of the relation between production and consumption had begun to take shape a good ten years before he wrote these lines, in 1847, when he published in

Das Westphälische Dampfboot a devastating attack on the Young Hegelian Karl Grün in which he took particular account of Grün's defense of "true socialism's" assertion, proposition, or phrase, *Satz,* that production is indeed equal to consumption—and that this equality flows from an affective balance imperiled by modernity. "In a word," Grün had written in his *Die soziale Bewegung in Frankreich und Belgien* of 1845, "*activity* and *pleasure* [more particularly, pleasure in consumption or in taste: *Genuss*] are one, but an upside-down world has torn them apart. Slipping between them the concept of value, of price [den Begriff des Werthes, des Preises], this upside-down world has torn apart humans from one another, and, with humans, society" (Mit Einem Worte, Thätigkeit und Genus sind Eins, eine verkehrte Welt hat sie nur auseinander gerissen, hat den Begriff des Werthes, des Preises zwischen beide hineingeschoben, durch diesen Begriff den Menschen mitten auseinander gerissen und mit dem Menschen die Gesellschaft).[19] Marx's impatience with this description, with its careless normativity and with its moralism, seizes on Grün's methodological and anthropological primitivism (for "true socialists," activity, *Tätigkeit,* in itself and immediately entails the "fantastical representation" [eine reine phantastische Vorstellung] of its enjoyment, *Genuss*, without the interference of any concept). Not only does the identity of production and consumption, so argued, lead, like other examples of the German ideology that is Marx's further concern, to "an apology for the existing order" (eine Apologie der bestehenden Zustände); it *also,* so argued, puts on display the most naïve form of idealism, differentiating fantastically between primitive, preconceptual acts and affects, the domain of representation or the imagination, *Vorstellungen*, and a subsequent conceptualization destined tragically to tear asunder human from human, and society from itself. The former, Marx shows, is attached for Grün and for "true socialism" to an imaginary and irreducible "humanity," free of contradiction but also entirely empty, concept-free: a term that does work for Grün, the work of establishing the identity of production and consumption on moral-anthropological grounds, to the degree that it cannot be thought (that is, to the degree that it cannot have the status of a second-order object, we might say). The economic defect of this primitive humanism is precisely its unthought stability: the moral need for reciprocal agreement ("sich decken müssen" is Grün's expression, noted by Marx) between action and pleasure, and between production and consumption, makes any over- or underproduction unthinkable, and with it any *movement* or change. Only in a puerile, Candidean best of all possible worlds, Marx says, could exchange-value be thus eliminated: in Grün's world, the world of Feuerbachian humanism, the world of "true socialism."

The identity or nonidentity of production and consumption, Marx says, cannot be approached in this naïve way—not in 1847, and not in 1857. When Marx returns to the problem in the pages of the "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," he takes on frontally the naïve account of identity he had criticized in Grün and in "true socialism" generally. Here again is the pertinent passage:

> Production is simultaneously consumption as well. It is consumption in a dual form—subjective and objective consumption. . . . The act of production itself is thus in all its phases also an act of consumption. The economists concede this. They call productive consumption both production that is simultaneously identical with consumption, and consumption which is directly concurrent with production. The identity of production and consumption amounts to Spinoza's proposition: *Determinatio est negatio*.
>
> (Die Produktion ist unmittelbar auch Konsumtion. Doppelte Konsumtion, subjektive und objective . . . Der Akt der Produktion selbst ist daher in allen seinen Momenten auch ein Akt der Konsumtion. Aber dies geben die Ökonomen zu. Die Produktion als unmittelbar identisch mit der Konsumtion, die Konsumtion als unmittelbar zusammenfallend mit der Produktion, nennen sie *produktive Konsumtion*. Diese Identität von Produktion und Konsumtion kommt hinaus auf Spinozas Satz: *Determinatio est negatio*.)

The standard English translations—both S. W. Ryazanskaya's, cited above, and Nicolaus's—tend to obscure the aggressively Hegelian shape that Marx gives his argument, by opting for "simultaneously" and "directly" (Ryazanskaya) or "immediately" and "directly" (Nicolaus) where Marx uses the single term *unmittelbar*: immediate; and by replacing the Hegelian *Momente* with "phases."[20] The first moment of classical economics—the moment of so-called productive consumption—corresponds indeed to the first moments of sense-certainty; just as immediate sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* will become self-consciousness, the immediate identity of production and consumption is to pass into more complex, mediate versions of identity between production and consumption (what are generally called "mediate identity" and "self-mediated identity"). Here is Hegel, in Baillie's translation: "The knowledge, which is at the start or immediately our object, can be nothing else than just that which is immediate knowledge, knowledge of the immediate, of what *is*. [Das Wissen, welches zuerst oder unmittelbar unser Gegenstand ist, kann kein anderes sein als dasjenige, welches selbst unmittelbares Wissen, Wissen des Unmittelbaren oder Seienden ist.] We have, in dealing with [immediate knowledge], to proceed, too, in an imme-

diate way [*unmittelbar*], to accept what is given, not altering anything in it as it is presented before us, and keeping mere apprehension [*Auffassen*] free from conceptual comprehension [*Begreifen*]."[21] The first moment, we have seen, concerns "production." Marx is first describing a model of production-for-oneself, which he associates with the "tedium" of a *locus communis,* a mythological agreed-upon fantasy of "production by a solitary individual outside society" that will serve as the eventual foundation for society. The unthinking equilibrium of Grün's "human" condition is before Marx: why would anyone, in solitude, produce or consume more than he or she needed? And what need would I, alone, have of producing those surplus objects, concepts for grasping classes of individuals, that I might need in order to exchange individuals of one class for individuals of another, by translating them *for* and *with* another into a general or abstract value form?

The tedious, primitive scene of auto-affective, self-identical "production," Marx says, is to be abandoned on two related grounds. In the first place, the notion of the "individual" is a back-formation from "society." "Individuals" are only isolated as singularities from the retroactive perspective of society, of the condition of *zoon politikon*. And in the second place, the concept of "production in general" is a "general concept," which means that it is secondary to the manifold of moments and instances of production. The individual is then the conceptual back-formation of the "social," and production in general is the conceptual back-formation of concrete instances of production. Both are products, and they are processes that proceed parallel to each other.

The subsequent moments in Marx's narrative and argument—both of which pass from production (with the attendant conceptualization of property and appropriation) to consumption, by means of distribution, and exchange or circulation—shift the logical status of individual and production by showing them to be not the primitive terms of the dynamic but terms cast, unified, and formed retrospectively, the effect of a subsequent moment whose specificity has been forgotten (in the case of production in general) or whose abstractness (that is, whose reference to a class) has equally been forgotten (as in the case of the individual who does the producing). It is not only for "true socialists" like Grün that the identity between production and consumption is unthought and unthinkable, a natural, unmarked condition prior to the roiling appearance of the concept, all other manifestations, all other identities, aberrations flowing from it, derivative, secondary. It is also for careless readers of Hegel, for whom relations among individuals, between individuals and the classes to which they belong—even the nations that historically gather these classes (in the political economic rather than the logical

sense) tensely together—follow naturally from, get under way upon, this primitive identitarianism, without being able to provide any way of thinking just *how* they follow from the tedium and inertia of primitive identity.

In Hegel, the device that gets this movement—structural as well as historical—underway is the machine of primary contradiction. Marx's translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*'s primary machinery stands on two hypotheses: that the value, but also, we might say, the ontological status, of products is always doubly determined; and that as a result the concept of immediate identity in the field of economic processes (or, indeed, in the moral anthropology that goes in hand with many descriptions of those processes) must be understood as a back-formation, an ideological fantasy produced with the goal, or the effect, of "apology[izing] for the existing order." From this fantastic, Edenic spot, the double determination of the commodity simultaneously marked and ideologically obscured, political economy moves into mediate, higher-order forms of identity on the shoulders of processes, costs, or drives that apparently enable immediate identity (distribution costs, irrationalities in consumer desire, technical changes on the side either of production or consumption), but in being incalculable a priori, or calculable on entirely different grounds from those used to assess the value of production and consumption, serve to determine these in ways that escape their own relation of identity and reciprocal determination.

There are nontrivial difficulties with this outline of Marx's translation of Hegel, and they bear upon the seeming repetition, at the level both of structure and of the historical account of the emergence of capitalist relations, of the double determination of the product. Antonio Negri's useful reading of the moment of production in the *Grundrisse* helps make them evident. For Negri, the answer to the Hegelian challenge lies in the characterization of the broader Marxist project: "Marx is not a Hegelian," he writes; "Marx is a Marxist: that is to say, a materialist and a dialectician, but above all else, a revolutionary. *The relation* [between production and consumption] *must contain the possibility of a scission*: there is no category which can be defined outside of the possibility of scission."[22] Negri makes a local and a methodological point as a result: "*The category of production—like that of value—in its generality and abstraction carries living within it the constitutive possibility of separation*. The dialectical approach is added to the materialist approach not in order to furnish the key to a totalitarian solution to determinacy, but in order to recognize the structural totality as the possibility of scission. . . . Can one not see production as scission, exploitation, and crisis?"[23] This is useful, especially as a characterization of what Marx calls the "method of political economy." "Scission" inscribes a sort of negation into identity; the concept

allows Negri's readers to understand that the base terms in the fantasy of the identity of production and consumption are already incoherent, divided: doubly determined. Presumably, capitalism's unstable drive-to-expand stands on this incoherent ground, which is its motor, the device or condition that propels capital away from identities that in their primitive, monadic form are arresting as well as arrested.

There is a symptomatic incoherence in Negri's own account, however, which takes shape around the concept of "constitutive possibility," as in his apodictic phrase "*The category of production—like that of value—in its generality and abstraction carries living within it the constitutive possibility of separation*." Both what this "possibility" is "constitutive" *of* and what it consists *in* are very hard to pin down. Take the suggestion that Marx turns to the "dialectical method" in order "to recognize the structural totality as the possibility of scission." "Structural totality" is then immanent within production as production's abstract form. Producing that form—passing from the moment of production to the "structural totality" of relations in capital, like passing from the individual commodity to the commodity inasmuch as it bears the form of the totality of relations of value in capital—might then be best imagined not as the dialectical unfolding of that form but as Aristotelian *dynamis*: the entelechic unfolding of an immanent form toward which these primitive elements tend: a "structural totality," a repetition, at the level both of structure and of the historical account of the emergence of capitalist relations, of the double determination of the product (of production of the commodity). But if so, then Negri's "possibility" and "scission" must be very weak concepts indeed. That this or that product can "possibly" have a value *because* value is its abstraction allows one to "recognize" the "structural totality" of "possible" values organized about an abstract general equivalent. This structural totality then becomes the general form of relations among production, products, and consumption. "Possibility" now means no more than the potential to form part of this organized, structured totality, which holds a place for the value of the product produced, in advance, formally. If "scission" now means "rupture" and "crisis," these are understood to take place within the horizon of a totality organized about an abstract, general equivalent. This may not be exactly "a totalitarian solution to determinacy," but it comes close.

Negri follows out, step by step and with helpful lucidity, the first moment of Marx's argument. That "Marx" is "a Marxist: that is to say, a materialist and a dialectician, but above all else, a revolutionary" means that Marx is (among other things) not a Hegelian, and it means, also among other things, that being-a-materialist, being-a-dialectician and being-a-revolutionary

are disseverable properties, not of the identity "Marx," but of the identity designated by the common noun, or common substantivized modifier, "a Marxist" (as, for instance, the modifier "Robinsonades" might possess disseverable properties that aren't exclusive to "Robinson Crusoe" or to Defoe's novel *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*). For Negri, "Marx" is "a Marxist" to the extent that he possesses those properties—and *anyone*, possessed of them, would be "a Marxist." These disseverable properties, loosely attached to the term "a Marxist," are the "constitutive possibility" of reconstitution *as* an abstract identity that any concrete identity (for instance, the concrete identity "Marx") finds, in its recognition of the mediating function of the "structural totality" or of the systematic lexicon or the discipline in which these disseverable properties are articulated.

In Negri, though, the provocative notion of "constitutive possibility" necessarily remains undeveloped—since it is here that Negri's reading most sharply departs from Marx's, precisely and paradoxically by bringing Marx closest to a rather flat-footed version of Hegel, and just when he is asserting that "Marx is not a Hegelian." For in its sharpest form—the form that Marx would have recognized from his early encounter with Lucretius, for instance—"constitutive possibility" cannot be translated, without misprision, into a mediating "structural totality." The "constitutive possibility" that an object or a name will disclose the abstract form of value does not become real according only to the object or the name's *dynamism*. Something else, a fall, a catastrophe, a dynamics, intervenes. Among other consequences, as we shall see: the unmooring of the identity, "Marx" from the descriptions or characterizations that attach to it and render it, one might say, *abstract*.

The device that Marx, or "Marx," will turn to in order to achieve this unmooring: the name "Spinoza" (and the system of translations and mediations among proper, common, and indexical designations that "Spinoza" names).[24]

Second Moment: *Determinatio est Negatio*

Concretely, then: what kinds of work does this name, the name "Spinoza," do in the here and now of 1857? Different work, obviously, than it did in 1785, when Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi published his polemical *Über die Lehre des Spinoza,* and provoked what came to be known as the *Pantheismusstreit* with Moses Mendelssohn, over the influence of Spinoza's work on Gotthold Lessing: different work, with distinct consequences for different disciplinary lexicalizations, than it does today. We recall how many other proper names Marx puts to work in his argument, proper, fictional, historical: Robinson, Rousseau, Grün, Ricardo, names with entailed histories. What rules do we

follow in order to pose, and seek to answer, this sort of question: what work does a proper name do, in Marx's text? How does this work resemble, or differ from, the work that common names do in the critique of political economy? I'm thinking of the words "table," or "potato," or "grain," or "commodity."

Marx's account of naming becomes most searching just here, where it crosses paths with the critique of decidable mediation that his *als*-thought, his indexical analytic, provides. It is here that the name "Spinoza" (and a number of things the name entails, as we will see) does its work, inasmuch as it is *Spinoza*'s phrase that Marx uses. Like the unpredictable costs of distribution and financialization that disturb the relation of identity between the produced commodity and the field of its consumption; like the over- and underdetermined effects of fantasy in the domain of (all: economic, erotic) desire; "Spinoza" provides Marx with a conceptual register that allows him to set aside both a classic concept of identity and the more strictly Hegelian version that had emerged as its alternative in the first half of the nineteenth century.

What is Marx's alternative? From what we can observe in this crucial but rather obscure early passage, Marx proposes a rather messy, dynamic *system* of identifications between and among concepts and objects. "Spinoza's phrase," inasmuch as it is *Spinoza's* and inasmuch as it names, weakly, an indexical register at work in concepts like "production," "consumption," "determination," and "negation," furnishes the defective identity of *Capital,* and of capital. This indexical register haunts and peoples *Capital*'s things, concepts, objects, and names; it is where Marx stages the catastrophe of capital with a degree of generality and sociality; it is where we readers of *Capital* encounter the catastrophe of mediation in the age of global credit-capitalism. The second sort of identity that Marx's lines set in place is formed by the proposition or phrase *determinatio est negatio* itself. Marx uses the tag elsewhere (and, following him, Engels uses it again in the *Anti-Dühring*); he may well have borrowed it from a compendium of philosophical terms, rather than from Spinoza's text—or, as is more likely, he may be thinking of Hegel's own use of the phrase, in the *Logic,* or in the *Lectures on Logic,* or in the *Encyclopedia*. The passage that Marx is citing or recalling comes from the middle paragraph of Spinoza's fiftieth letter, to Jarig Jelles, of June 2, 1674. This is Spinoza, in an early Latin rendering of the (now lost) Dutch:

> Quantum ad hoc, quod figura negatio, non verò aliquid positivum est; manifestum est, integram materiam, indefinitè consideratam, nullam posse habere figuram; figuramque in finitis, ac determinatis corporibus locum tantùm obtinere. Qui enim se figuram percipere ait, nil aliud eo indicat, quàm se rem

> determinatam, et quo pacto ea sit determinata, concipere. Haec ergo determinatio ad rem juxta suum esse non pertinet: sed econtra est ejus non esse. Quia ergo figura non aliud, quàm determinatio, et determinatio negatio est; non poterit, ut dictum, aliud quid, quàm negatio, esse.[25]

Here is R. H. M. Elwes's 1883 translation into English, which I have slightly modified in the interest of greater literalism:

> As to the doctrine that figure is negation and not in truth anything positive, it is plain that the whole of matter considered indefinitely can have no figure, and that figure can only exist in finite and determinate bodies. For he who says, that he perceives a figure, merely indicates thereby, that he conceives a determinate thing, and how it is determinate. This determination, therefore, does not appertain to the thing according to its being, but, on the contrary, is its non-being. As then figure is nothing else than determination, and determination is negation, figure, as has been said, can be nothing but negation.[26]

It is no surprise that Marx recalls Spinoza's dense, provocative letter, or recalls it through the screen of Hegel's interpretation, as Pierre Macherey argues.[27] Shorn of the steps that precede and follow it, *determinatio est negatio* does indeed come close to, *kommt hinaus,* the identity "production is consumption": the two phrases are formally identical, even if the analogy that Marx appears to be setting up remains obscure. Formally, at any rate, to pass from one phrase, "production is consumption" to the other, *determinatio est negatio*, to translate one into the other, would mean simply moving from a phrase, *Satz,* in one lexicon, to another, formally equivalent one in another lexicon. If this were the case, then Marx would be signaling to his reader a disciplinary, lexical shift, though the *content* of the proposition in hand would be the same, or close enough: *das kommt hinaus*. At issue, then: translation, "coming close" to another lexicon's way of expressing identity, mapping a phrase onto another discipline's phrases, using the latter to explain, even to determine the former. The procedure should be entirely reflexive. If we approach matters from the political-economic side, we will speak of the identity between the lexicons of political economy and philosophy under the aspect of the identification of production and consumption: the two phrases have the same value. (One might say they can be assessed according to the same index value.) If we approach the procedure from the side of the discipline of philosophy, we will say that the identity or neighborliness, or mutual translatability of the two phrases, stands on their sharing a referent.

But Marx is not proceeding so simply. How do we determine the boundaries, that is, the *figure* or *figura,* of *Spinozas Satz*? Whether he has

read the whole of Spinoza's letter to Jelles or is simply pulling a celebrated phrase out of the standing reservoir of cultural-philosophical tropes, in citing Spinoza's phrase Marx is attending closely to Spinoza's argument in the letter. (If Marx did not read the whole letter, he nonetheless welcomes into his argument, willy-nilly, on the shoulders of the snippet he cites, the argument that surrounds *Spinozas Satz* in Spinoza's letter.) That argument is not self-evident. Two traditions with respect to the Latin phrase (which may or may not be an accurate translation of the Dutch) "manifestum est, integram materiam, indefinitè consideratam, nullam posse habere figuram" bear distinguishing (though they are very close; they neighbor each other; one *kommt hinaus auf* the other). Elwes renders this, "it is plain that the whole of matter considered indefinitely can have no figure"; Wolf's 1927 translation, and Samuel Shirley's more recent one as well, say instead "the totality of matter, considered without limitation."[28] Edwin Curley's translation reads: "As for shape being a negation, and not something positive, it's manifest that matter as a whole, considered without limitation, can have no shape, and that shape pertains only to finite and determinate bodies."[29] It matters less that "indefinite" should become "indefinitely" in one case, "without limitation" in others, than that the translations resolve differently the slight ambiguity in the Latin, which bears on whether "indefinite" modifies *both* "the whole of matter, the totality of matter," *and* the way in which matter is considered, thought itself. Can thought regarding "the whole of matter, the totality of matter" be definite, if its object is indefinite? Or—a slightly more interesting matter—is the "indefiniteness" of one similar to that of the other, and in what respects? And further—is the "indefiniteness" of the "whole of matter, the totality of matter" of the same order as the "indefiniteness" of God? The strangely amphibian term "considered" is particularly useful to English translators: it repeats the slight Latin ambiguity by hovering between a *passive* verbal function (*someone,* someone who takes the trouble to think rightly, considers matter) and an *impersonal,* adjectival function (matter is just what is generally agreed to be, what is generally and impersonally considered to be, without limitation). The questions are central to Spinoza's epistemology (the parallelism doctrine set out in Scholium 7 to Proposition 2 of the *Ethics* is the *locus classicus*), and we get only the sketchiest version right here—where Spinoza's letter enacts them. They are imported into Marx's text alongside *Spinozas Satz*—with grave consequences for the phrase's analogue, the phrase foundational to traditional economics, "production is consumption." In what way does production determine, that is, give a figure, boundaries, an inside and an outside form to, "consumption"? Is "consumption" the *figure* of production? If so, would we want to understand "figure," *figura,* in

the Pauline sense that Auerbach gives it, and argue that the relation between the two terms is structured temporally, providentially—that the identity of production and consumption is typological, adventitious, the subject of revelation? Production *is*, that is, *will be,* it already will be, consumption? (Where production *was,* there consumption *will be*.)[30]

It is entirely possible that the letter's slight ambiguity is introduced in transit from the lost Dutch original to the Latin. Nevertheless, the ambiguity speaks to an aspect of Spinoza's analysis that Marx hears clearly, and which pulls Marx's interpretation of Spinoza's phrase out of the main currents of reception of Spinoza (including the *Pantheismusstreit* among Jacobi, Mendelssohn, and others).[31] For Spinoza's letter (as we have received it) is not only ambiguous with regard to the relation between (determinate, indeterminate) thought and its (indeterminate, determinate) objects. In consort with this (possible) ambiguity the phrase *determinatio est negatio*, as well as the name to which it is attached (by Marx) do double duty (the phrase, we might say, is a disseverable property of the name "Spinoza": whoever utters it or subscribes to it is a "Spinozist"). In this respect, and in particular as regards the *way* in which it performs its double duty, "Spinoza's phrase *determinatio est negatio*" becomes formally untranslatable into the identity represented by "production is consumption." In Spinoza's phrase, *determinatio est negatio* is both used and mentioned, one might say; "determination" and "negation" are *mentioned* in Spinoza's phrase (and in Marx's citation), mentioned as the names of terms set into a relation of identity with one another: "determination" is "negation," as one might say "oranges are orange" or "Socrates is a man" or "S" is "P." What is odd about the phrase is that it is *also* determinative: "'determination' is 'negation'" is a determination (inasmuch as the phrase *determines,* gives a figure to, "determination": it *is* "negation") and "'determination' is 'negation'" is a negation (inasmuch as the phrase entails that "determination" is not whatever is other than what it is).

We now can see a further reason for Marx's interest in *Spinozas Satz*. Not only does Spinoza's phrase operate in two registers—as a logical *and* as a metalogical statement that takes its terms as its object—but it offers no coherent way of deciding in which register it is operating at any point. (We recall the inchoate, allegorical expression of these two registers that Marx finds in Lucretius, the acrobat, the *Luftspringer.*) Thus, although it would be tempting to imagine, as Negri's analysis invites us to do, that this relation between logical and metalogical functions in *Spinozas Satz* works as a sort of internal *scission* of the first-order terms—"production," "consumption," "determination," "negation," as well as the copulative *est* in the Latin expression—it would be incorrect to do so. Because we find nowhere in either

the logical or the metalogical lexicon a rule governing the play, alternation, interaction, or neighboring-upon-one-another of logical and metalogical functions, it is not possible to determine, on grounds either or both would take to be regulative, whether "determination" and "negation" are logical or metalogical operators—and in consequence which is the "object" term, which its "abstraction"; which is the first-order, and which the second-order object. The distinction is definitive, especially from a disciplinary point of view. Take, for instance, the terms Marx sets next to *Spinozas Satz,* terms he considers foundational to political economy. The conception of the *market* against which Marx is arguing draws the distinction between "production" and "consumption" precisely in figurative terms—consumption imagined as the outcome of production but also as its goal and, inversely, production as the cause and the condition of consumption—each drawing its value from the other, though never quite identically.

By analogy to Spinoza's indeterminate phrase *determinatio est negatio,* however, one would not know whether what one "produces" is "consumed" as a material product, an object, or instead as an example of a product, as an element of a symbolic-cultural lexicon. When I buy a jacket or a table, am I acting out of spontaneous need for the commodity, or out of desire for its symbolic function or for the symbolic value it also bears? Posed this way and approached practically the question seems silly—who cares *why* the consumer consumes the product? Or even: wouldn't this undecidable relation between logical and metalogical functions, when translated into the terms "production" and "consumption," amount to a sort of added value—an object term that *also* has the function of describing other objects, and which then can be consumed, interpreted, on both levels, and can produce pleasure, utility, or sustenance on more than one level? I buy the jacket or the table because of a perceived need; I also secure the possession of a symbolic object from which I derive, reciprocally, a symbolic identity, some standing in the cultural imaginary, a defensible and discrete position in the field of cultural-symbolic objects. My intent, my motives, are of minimal interest, for instance, and especially to the person selling me the product—which now appeals to me to some extent precisely *because* its unsettled status furnishes the fantasmatic possibility of bearing two identities simultaneously: as the subject of the intentional act of consumption, and as the effect, the product of that act.

But what, then, of classically *political* acts? (The critique of political economy is also, we should not forget, a critique of *political* economy.) The analysis of *economic* identity appears to be different—pressingly different, consequentially different—when the matter to be settled concerns minimally

political acts, even what we would call foundationally political acts: the decision, following Locke, to "unite into one society," to "quit every one his executive power of the law of Nature, and to resign it to the public," thereby entering into "a political or civil society."[32] Or such acts as the determination of my interest in this or that state of affairs or outcome; the articulation of a demand; the decision to act in this or that way with regard to what I take to be my interests, or my demand; *prises de position*; resistance, active or passive, to the state's demands, or to those of others acting out of antagonistic interests. Here, surely, the difference between the two positions collapsed in the *economic* register—where the identity of production and consumption may indeed eventuate in my being unable to decide whether I act freely in choosing to consume this or that product, or whether my freedom is the effect of my choice—is significant, even crucial. And yet here, too, *Spinozas Satz* does its strange, disruptive work.

Third Moment: *Spinozas Satz*

Spinoza's phrase? Well—*is* it Spinoza's phrase? (And not Hegel's phrase, or Ludwig Feuerbach's, or a phrase drawn from the reservoir of philosophical clichés current in the mid–nineteenth century.) What are its boundaries, what is its figure or *figura*? It seems necessary to answer such questions before maintaining that it is *because determinatio est negatio* is *Spinoza's* phrase that it works just here, that it does work just here. Yes, we say, it is because the phrase is Spinoza's that the identities that Marx lays out, compactly, can be translated systematically into one another—here where the theory of political economy is being named and grounded. But to what dynamic object does "Spinoza" remit? And just how, according to what catastrophe, does it remit to that object?

Say that we ask, as we did above, what sort of work the name "Spinoza" does, here and now, roughly in 1857, in an argument concerned to lay out the proper method for studying political economy. How might "Spinoza" be linked to an account of negative determination? To an account of mediation? In this way, I am raising again the question—amply and ably studied by Pierre Macherey, though on a different register from the one on which I would like to proceed—why Marx attributes a fundamentally Hegelian form of negation to the translated "Spinoza." If we follow this avenue, we will be asking after the *meaning,* if not the cultural function, of the name or the term "Spinoza" in roughly 1857. By seeking a *figurative* meaning for the name we will be risking two elementary philosophical mistakes: proper names may *refer* to this or that object or person (a person called Spinoza, or a person called

Marx, say) but they do not "mean" or signify in the way that concepts or common nouns do (say, the nouns "consumption" or "production"). And neither a proper nor a common noun, nor any modifier formed from either (Spinozist, "Marxist"), is true or false in the way that statements, phrases or propositions are (for instance, a proposition like *determinatio est negatio,* which may be true or false; or a statement like "Spinoza was a *marrano* Jew"; or one such as "Marx was a Marxist"). Even construed as a figure, a name, common or proper, cannot be true or false, although a statement or a phrase about a name might well be, if one is operating under certain conditions, according to disciplinary conventions that make such judgments possible: "Spinoza is the author of the *Ethics,*" or "*determinatio est negatio* is a phrase written by Spinoza," or even "Spinoza is the name of a figure" are conceivably true or false phrases.

But this is not our concern. (It seems not to be, I should say.) When we ask, "What does it mean in 1857 to use the name 'Spinoza'?" or "What does it mean to claim in 1857 that 'the phrase *Determinatio est negatio*' was written by 'Spinoza'?" or "What does it mean to claim in 1857 that '*Spinoza's* phrase *determinatio est negatio*' serves to get the dialectics of commodity identity under way?," we are asking questions that reflect a different set of disciplinary conventions and expectations—historical questions, even historicist. Or rather—before settling on how political economy gets underway in 1857, we will need to decide which set of disciplinary conventions we will apply in interpreting this moment in Marx's text. The matter is not trivial even if we accept that these disciplinary conventions are already given, and that our decision is first taxonomic (we will be determining how to read this work, and doing so in part by establishing that it is not to be read in this or that other way: *determinatio est negatio*). What sort of thing is Marx—a political economist? A historian? A philosopher? Are his works to be read as fictions? As works of literary or cultural criticism? (He is an acute reader of Defoe, of Lucretius, of Shakespeare, and so on.) Does the name "Spinoza" figure equally, or even compatibly, in all these disciplinary frames? For our inquiry to get under way we need to know—or we need to decide—what frame we are choosing, or working in.

Let's say that we ask the prior question. We ask after the conditions under which *any* disciplinary, or lexical, or semantic frame is established: after the moment, one might say, of *production* of disciplinarity, and of its correlative *consumption*. This too is a question that pertains both to structure and to history. Here, at this moment, in 1857, but also today, when I am writing and when you are reading, and with respect to our judgments regarding the text that Marx signs in 1857, we have not established whether a proper

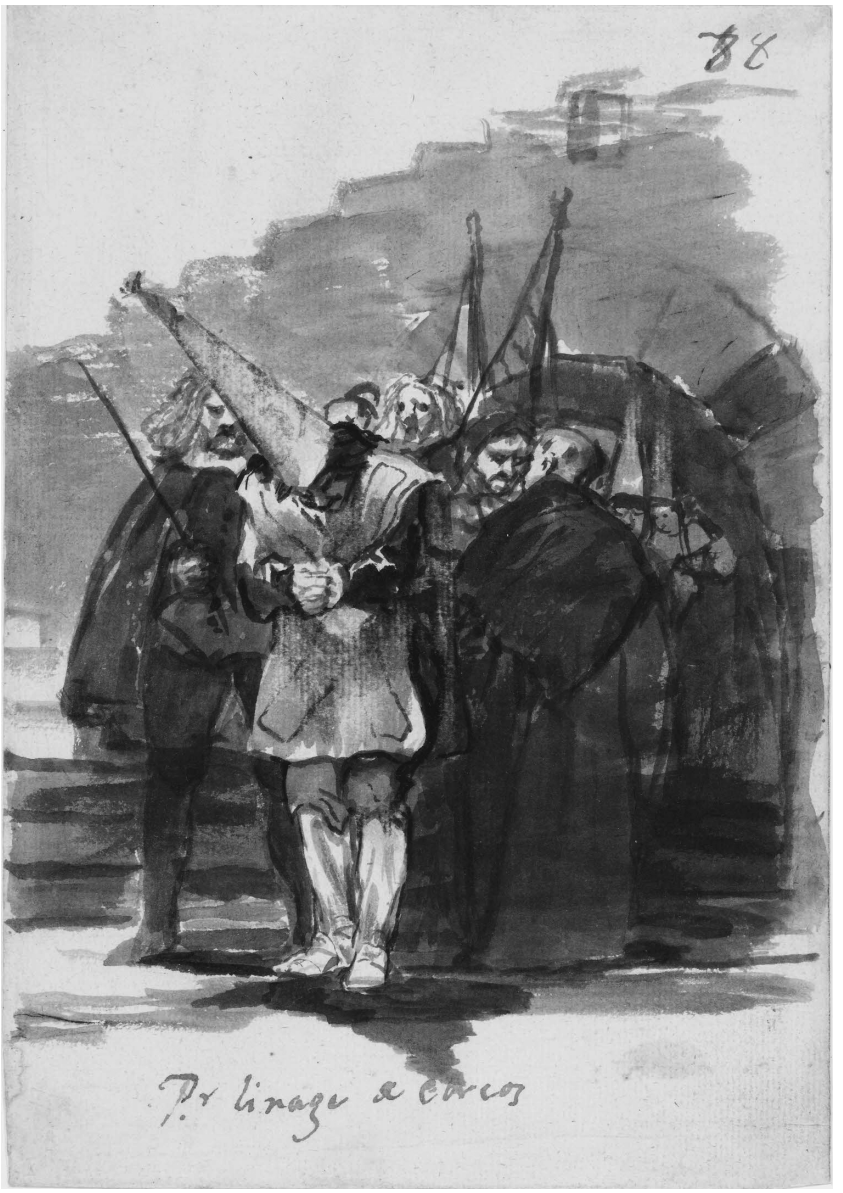


Figure 4. Francisco de Goya, *Por linaje de hebreos* (For being of Jewish ancestry). Victims of the Inquisition going to the Auto de Fe, ca. 1814–24. Brush drawing in gray ink and wash. 205 × 142 mm. © The Trustees of the British Museum 1862,0712.187. Used by permission.

name—"Spinoza," but also the name "Marx"—is indeed proper, to what, or in what sense. (Recall Negri: "Marx is not a Hegelian," he writes; "Marx is a Marxist: that is to say, a materialist and a dialectician, but above all else, a revolutionary." Negri's "that is to say," the tag or mark of internal translation, tells us at least this: that whatever it means to be a "Marxist" is not self-evidently clear; its properties need to be listed, bounded, figured, determined.) Something like a circle threatens: to determine the work done by a name or a phrase, in this or that context (one might say: to consume the name, to understand that we are consuming it), we need to understand the disciplinary frame, the lexicon, in which the name, or the phrase, fits and works; but that frame is in this case the *product* of the name—as, for instance, the first, immediate moment in Marx's account of the proper method of political economy is the product of Spinoza's phrase *determinatio est negatio* (inasmuch as it is retroactively determined *as* the first moment of the dialectics of commodity production-consumption by that phrase). The disciplinary forms that allow us to understand how names and phrases work, at this time or that, in a discursive environment whose taxonomy is as yet undetermined, are not immediately given: they are indeed *also* the product of those names and phrases, and of the work these phrases and names do in different circumstances. Marx's phrase, "Spinoza's phrase, *Determinatio est negatio,*" becomes intelligible—let's say: consumable—when the circle of disciplinary lexicalization that it discloses becomes the abstract form against which other nouns, proper and common, and other phrases regarding these, are valued.

Step outside the boundaries of Marx's bald phrase. Engels too uses the name "Spinoza," and he does so in ways that appear complementary to Marx's use of the name: for both, *Spinozas Satz* is intricately connected, not just to a demotic philosophical lexicon current midcentury, or in specific to the *Pantheismusstreit* so pressing to the previous generation, but also, less manifestly though quite as consequentially, to the *literary* lexicon of the day. Here we may speak with some propriety of the *sense* of the proper name "Spinoza": "Spinoza" here is a token, a metonym for a series of controversial religious and philosophical positions (not entirely compatible positions: pantheism, atheism, monism, skepticism); "Spinoza" is *also* a token for the civic and ethical virtues that the historical Spinoza represented for contemporaries of the young Engels and the young Marx: courageous resistance to religious obscurantism, steadfastness, romance—very much the virtues also associated in the previous generation with Friedrich Schiller's character Don Carlos. Finally, "Spinoza" is a token for the exotic form of wounded, defective identity from which these virtues, and these philosophical and religious positions, are

thought to flow, in these literary and biographical works of the first half of the nineteenth century: the defective identity of the marrano Jew unwilling to enroll in *any* orthodoxy: religious, national, ethnic, familial.

To make the argument that the proper name "Spinoza" does work in Marx's text, and in Engels's, I have been conflating three linked systems of mediation, three identification machines in which and by means of which different meanings cluster about "Spinoza." These linked systems are definitive not just of Engels's use of *Spinozas Satz,* but of Marx's as well, and of our own understanding of these today. What is most striking about them are the peculiar concepts of *system*—of systematic organization, of relay or network—that they set in place just where the proper name "Spinoza" is put to work.

Let me now pull them apart, pursuing the circuit of relays to which the name "Spinoza" refers and in which it works in the period leading up to Marx's mention of *Spinozas Satz*.

Spinoza's name works in the first place, and most obviously, as a metonym for philosophical positions certain to arouse passions, political and religious as well as philosophical, at the time that Marx is writing. (Prussian censorship, he writes in 1842, "must reject the intellectual heroes of morality, such as Kant, Fichte and Spinoza, as irreligious, as violating propriety, manners, and external decorum. All these moralists start out from a contradiction in principle between morality and religion, for *morality* is based on the *autonomy* of the human mind, *religion on its heteronomy*": "heroism of morality"; "autonomy"; a "contradiction in principle" on which the work begins.[33] Translated and refigured, the partial concepts and the logical operations transforming them persist and return throughout Marx's work.)

"Spinoza," however, works also as a token for a literary character, the subject of biographies and novels, biographical novels, plays, and short stories. The literary world of Marx's day was, if not abuzz exactly with Spinoza's name, at least comfortably aware of it. Consider, for instance, just in Germany, Karl Gutzkow's *Uriel Acosta,* still his best-known work, an adaptation for the theater of his early (1834) short story "Der Sadduzäer von Amsterdam"; Moses Hess's 1837 *Die heilige Geschichte der Menschheit: Von einem Jünger Spinozas*; and Berthold Auerbach's 1837 *Spinoza: Ein Denkerleben,* Auerbach's five-volume translation of Spinoza's works into German, with his biography, appearing in Stuttgart in 1841.[34] Communication among the literate elites of the period being notoriously tight, we find—as we might expect—that Marx and Engels mention Auerbach in their letters and in their work, though lightly. (They cannot have been unaware of Auerbach's novel and of his translation, however.) We find also that Engels was in close

touch between 1839 and 1846 with Gutzkow, a prolific critic and literary entrepreneur who is hardly remembered today but who stood at the center of the cluster of writers and intellectuals who formed what comes to be known as *Junges Deutschland*.[35]

The relation between Engels and Gutzkow was not an easy one, though it began cordially enough. Under the pseudonyms S. Oswald and Friedrich Oswald, Engels wrote a number of pieces, primarily commentaries on the politics of the day and literary reviews, for the *Telegraph für Deutschland*, Gutzkow's magazine. Gutzkow's works were not infrequently Engels's subject matter—for instance, a piece from May 1840 on "Karl Gutzkow as Dramatist" considers the theatrical works as well as Gutzkow's early novels and literary sketches;[36] in February of that year Engels touches on Gutzkow's anti-Hegelian treatise *Zur Philosophie der Geschichte*.[37] *Junges Deutschland* maintained a generally liberal, Schilleresque position toward the state that Engels appears to have found increasingly irritating; Gutzkow breaks with him rather bitterly in the mid 1840s. Gutzkow is remembered—when he is—primarily for two works: *Uriel Acosta* and an early novel, *Wally, die Zweiflerin,* which appeared in summer 1835 to great scandal. *Wally* came under sharp attack from Gutzkow's former friend Wolfgang Menzel on the grounds that it "immorally" promoted skepticism; that it was nothing but a "Gallocentric" attack on Christianity written under the "filthy" influence of George Sand and the Marquis de Sade; that it, and the writings of the *Junges Deutschland* group generally, "expressly declared that 'patriotism was only an animal impulse of the blood,' and that we must devote ourselves not to one nation, but to the whole human race, (which, however, is to be derived from France)"; and—devastatingly, it appears—that Gutzkow and *Junges Deutschland* "received the greatest applause, in Germany, among certain Jews, who had for a long time worshipped their Heine."[38] A ban on all of *Junges Deutschland*'s works followed soon after the publication of *Wally* and a brief period in jail for Gutzkow; the ban on *Junges Deutschland* was shortly extended to include a prohibition on the publication of Heinrich Heine's work as well.

Neither ban lasted terribly long, but they revealed and consolidated the particularly sharp identification that Gutzkow and the early *Junges Deutschland* group expressed with figures who appeared to them to stand for the "Gallic" principles of freedom of press and expression. *Wally*, for instance, opens with an epigraph drawn from Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida* to the effect that "The wound of peace is surety,/ Surety secure; but modest doubt is called/The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches/To th' bottom of the worst" (2.2) (Des Friedens Wund' ist Sicherheit, / Sorglose

Sicherheit; doch weiser Zweifel/Wird Leuchte der Vernunft, des Arztes Sonde,/Der Wunde Grund zu prüfen). Gutzkow cites from Ernst Ortlepp's 1839 translation, in his edition of Shakespeare's dramatic works. Ortlepp's version of this very hard line is fascinatingly tendentious. His German loses much of the ambivalence that the peculiar concept of a "wound of peace" displays ("surety" wounds peace but is also the consequence of peace); it renders Shakespeare's "but" as "doch" and loses thereby the ambiguity of the English, which joins the consequential sense of "but" with the particle's disjunctive sense, giving "modest doubt" as "weiser Zweifel" (wise doubt), borrows "wise" from its place in Shakespeare's verse—"beacon of the wise"—so as to make doubt's "modesty" into "wisdom"; finally, translating "beacon of the wise" as "Leuchte der Vernunft" (light of reason) not only makes the line more abstract, it places it squarely in the register of philosophical enlightenment: the "wise" are the champions of reason, *Vernunft*; their battles are the battles the Enlightenment fights against the forces of superstition, reaction, obscurantism suspicion. Schiller and Immanuel Kant's influence is felt strongly.

Nonetheless, Gutzkow's choice of Shakespeare's words to shelter and explain the scandal of "modest doubt" (*weiser Zweifel*) is canny: the cultural imprimatur that Shakespeare conferred at the time in Germany is notorious. Gutzkow's identification with the character Hector in these lines is most telling, of course: like Shakespeare's character, *Wally* counsels "modest doubt," doubt within the bounds of reason and in the service of enlightened reason; Gutzkow may even be said to contemplate, apotropaically, Hector's fate at the hands of Achilles, and to be assuming the heroic risks of publishing the novel in the face of inevitable criticism, as the "gallant Trojan" Hector assumes the risk of meeting Achilles, "fell as death," in Shakespeare's words. Gutzkow's systematic strategy of associating himself with cultural figures for heroic dissent culminated in 1846 in Paris, when he published *Uriel Acosta*. *Uriel Acosta* is loosely based on Acosta's autobiographical *Exemplar humanae vitae*, of 1687. (The *Exemplar humanae vitae* was published in a second edition in Leipzig in 1849; it is probable that Gutzkow knew it at secondhand.) In Gutzkow's play, Acosta's recantation represents a choice of love—for Judith—over truth; Judith herself, however, has (unbeknownst to Acosta) chosen to marry her suitor Jochai, thus confirming that she remains a Jew and assuring that her father's wealth, threatened because of Judith's engagement to the "heretic" Acosta, is restored. The outcome: a double suicide. A character enters the last act with Acosta, who seeks Judith; this character, Acosta's young nephew, bears offstage Acosta's counsel, just before the play's denouement: "—Never think," says Uriel Acosta to him (in Henry Spicer's 1885 translation).

Sleep—sleep, like the flowers
Content to flourish in their loveliness,
And never ask who made them. Float afar
On the safe sea of ignorance. Answer not
This man, or that—who, plagued with their own doubts,
Ask, "Are you Jew, or Christian?" "Do you love
The king, or the people best?" –Keep your soul's secret
And so find peace, my boy.[39]

This boy's name is Baruch Spinoza; Gutzkow's audience and readers would have known how little "peace" he would find, how little heed Spinoza paid to his uncle's counsel, and how closely instead he followed the exemplary path laid out in the *Exemplar humanae vitae.*

Step back now. Let us try to understand, from a distance, the progressively tangling circuit of literary-cultural relays in which "Spinoza" works in the years when Marx and Engels are writing. When Marx uses what he calls "Spinoza's phrase"—*Spinozas Satz*—the proper name is a token of different types. It is determined, to return to Peirce's provocative observation, inasmuch as its cultural object is indeed *dynamic,* that is, inasmuch as what "Spinoza" names for Marx is a cluster of relations, contested and incongruous, at work among other proper names that remit in their turn to further relations. In the system of identifications-with, and by-means-of, names in *Capital* and in the *Grundrisse,* names, including the names of literary figures, work as proxies for or indices of concepts, and their systematic form works as the index of *a* concept subsuming these names (and the concepts they stand in for, metonymously) in a dynamic object-form. Gutzkow becomes Hector, in *Troilus,* and Acosta; Auerbach identifies with Spinoza; *Junges Deutschland* with all these figures. In each and all of these cases stands, as the index of their systematic, formal relation, the figure of the Sadducee, the doubter who carries, hidden but determining, a secret. His definitive characteristic? The concept to which every proper name remits? The dynamic object that every name indicates and that determines all names in this register? It's a rather fraught one. It covers, of course, the heroism of reason. (1842: "The intellectual heroes of morality, such as Kant, Fichte and Spinoza . . .") Thus the Wally figure, who becomes Acosta, who becomes Spinoza: "des Arztes Sonde,/ Der Wunde Grund zu prüfen." It rhymes with the figure of the Sadducee, who probes the wound, who can be a *Sonde* both therapeutic and descriptive (a *Sonde* can be used for the purposes of information, *prüfen*), the Hippocratic figure who in probing, or thinking, also makes the wound larger and wounds the wound again, as if madly inverting the functions attributed to Parsifal's spear.[40] The dynamic object, or concept of identity, that this

relay system denotes indexically is not the immediate identity of production with consumption; it is not the "identity" of determination with negation, a proposition serving as the ground for *systematic* movement between logical and metalogical registers in Marx's own phrases.

What sort of "identity" attaches to the name "Spinoza" when Marx identifies *Spinozas Satz*, *determinatio est negatio,* with the founding identity of classical political economy, "Production is consumption"? Turn now to the second system of mediations that cluster about the name "Spinoza" in Marx and Engels's works, and help to give the empty proper name sense and operative force: they help translate the proper name into a concept; they give it *meaning.*

"Spinoza" *does work* in Marx's texts, and in Engels's, inasmuch as the name "Spinoza" forms part of a system of cultural relays concerning, precisely, the matter of *identity*—the specific, tormented sorts of identity that might have been associated, definingly, with "Spinoza." (This would make it simultaneously more comprehensible, and much less so, that Marx turns to "*Spinozas Satz*" just where he is considering the concept, and the logical operator, *Identität*.)[41] What sort of identity *did* "Spinoza" designate, when Marx put the name to use? We could devise an extensive net of sentences shaped like *Spinozas Satz,* placing the name "Spinoza" in the subject spot occupied by *determinatio* or by *consumption*: In 1857, our net would go, "Spinoza est . . . ," and a cluster of predicated nouns would follow, equivalent among one another only inasmuch as each *is, est,* inasmuch as each *determines* what "Spinoza" *is.* Jew, atheist, philosopher, apostate, heretic. Man. Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese. European. Marrano. And so on.

The list of lexical-semantic determinations is not infinite, but it may not be countable, either. In any case it is contradictory, and contentious. For Bruno Bauer, intent on demonstrating the cultural irrelevance of Judaism to European culture, Spinoza presented a special problem—that of the manifestly influential, even central, *Jewish philosopher.* Bauer solves the problem as it were by definition. "Wer hat achtzenhundert Jahre hindurch an der Bildung Europas gearbeitet? . . . Kein einziger Jude ist zu nennen. Spinoza war kein Jude mehr, als er sein System schuf" (Who is it that worked for eighteen hundred years to build Europe? Not a Jew is to be named among them. Spinoza was no longer a Jew, when he created his system).[42] Bauer's suggestion was immediately controversial—and it is in the context of that controversy that Marx published in 1843 his response to Bauer, *On the Jewish Question*. The controversy regarding Bauer's assessment of Spinoza spread beyond Germany. Benjamin Bary, a little-known figure described in an article in the *Revue Indépendante* as "a young Polish Jew who has studied at

Königsberg," published in 1843 *Zeitgemässe Gedanken über die Emanzipation des Menschen,* and addressed, forcefully and directly, Bauer's argument about Spinoza: "Warum aber Bauer meint, dass Spinoza kein Jude gewesen sei, ist unbegreiflich" (What Bauer might have meant by saying that Spinoza was no Jew is incomprehensible).[43] Writing the same year as Bary, the much better-known figure of Gotthold Salomon (an acclaimed translator and polemicist, active in Heine's circle) published in Hamburg a furious response to Bauer, *Bruno Bauer und seine gehaltlose Kritik über die Judenfrage.* Commenting on Bauer's phrase, Salomon exclaims:

> Sagt Bauer: "Spinoza war kein Jude mehr, als er sein System Schuf." Wiederum eine Behauptung à la Bauer, d.h. eine originelle—Unwahrheit. Baruch Spinoza hat nie ein christliches Glaubensbekenntiniss abgelegt; ist nie aus der jüdischen zur christlichen Kirche übergetreten—fur einen Weisen wie Spinoza hiesse das von dem Regen in der Traufe kommen!—Einen bessern Juden gab es nie! Den Jüdischen Gattungen gehört Spinoza nicht an, wohl aber der jüdischen Lehre, und zwar bis an seinen Tod, ja nur dem Juden Spinoza war es möglich, ein solches System wie das seinige ist, zu schaffen.
>
> (Bauer says: "Spinoza was no longer a Jew, because he created his system." Another one of Bauer's typical assertions—that is, false. Baruch Spinoza never adopted the Christian faith. He never converted from Judaism to Christianity: for a wise man like Spinoza, that would have been to go from the frying pan into the fire! There was never a better Jew! Spinoza did not attend to the Jewish faith, but held rather to Jewish learning, till his death. Indeed, it was only possible for the Jewish Spinoza, for Spinoza as a Jew, to create a system such as his.)[44]

More forceful still, this exclamation in Karl Grün's 1844 *Die Judenfrage: Gegen Bruno Bauer:* "'Spinoza war kein Jude mehr, als er sein System schuf,' sagt Bauer. Schöne Sophisterei! Der wahre Philosoph engt sich in keine, auch nicht in die weitesten Glaubenschranken ein" (Lovely sophistry! The true philosopher will never constrain himself within the bounds of any belief, not even the broadest).[45]

We now have the beginnings of answers to the questions that Marx poses in these introductory, primitive, Edenic scenes of the "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy": what sort of object is the name "Spinoza"; *how* is it produced, and in what way might the analysis of its production help us to understand Marx's critique of the discipline of political economy? What, then, might be the alternatives to political economy, and to the conceptualization of disciplinarity and objectuality attached to it, that *Capital*

will eventually propose for producing objects like "Spinoza," deciding on their status, sorting and relating them, and making them effective? What system of concepts is Marx building upon the work of the proper name "Spinoza," and upon the incoherent or cryptic sense of identity that name bears with it? Is it indeed a system, and if so, how is it organized, how are its elements or objects produced, identified, and brought, through second-order objects, into relation with one another? *Spinozas Satz* is not a phrase in a *discipline*, in the sense on which we opened, inasmuch as the cryptic identities it turns on are radically different from the three-part, autopoetic topology advanced by systems theorists.[46] In Marx's dynamic objects, objects like *Spinozas Satz*, the old distinction between *auto-* and *allo-*, self and other or self and stranger, is no longer pertinent. The relation between discursive, anthropological, and representational fields now falls under a double aspect: of radical exteriority *and* of radical intimacy. Of a set of asymmetric relations between the lexical, the anthropological, and the representational fields, each extimate, Lacan might say, to the other two.

The objects and second-order objects of *Capital* are produced catastrophically and can only be sorted and grasped by means of secret and defective procedures: they have identities that are both "continuous" and not; they can, and may not, be designated indexically. The defective and unruly mediation that shapes them is not, as Grün and the Feuerbachian tradition had maintained, slipped in after the fact so as to alienate humans from one another and society from them and from itself. Marx's objects—first order as well as second order—are not just doubly determined, as commodities are: they are also doubly undetermined. "Spinoza," like other so-called proper names enrolled in the pages of Marx's work, works indexically, "forcefully" (I am returning to Peirce's words, from the epigraph to this chapter). It is an object that produces, at the moment when what Peirce called the term's "interpretant" takes account of it, an object "having *thisness*, and distinguishing itself from other things by its continuous identity and forcefulness, but not by any distinguishing characters . . . called a *hecceity*." A first sense of the *dynamism* of object-terms like "Spinoza" is entailed: the continuous objects forcefully produced by these object-terms are the mechanical unfolding of their entelechies. Between "Spinoza," *Spinozas Satz,* and *determinatio est negatio,* a principle of autopoetic production obtains, as "continuous" as the "identities" of each of the objects it relates. As we have seen, however, neither "continuous identity" is definitive of Marx's dynamic objects—not the "continuous identity" of the dynamic objects dynamically produced in the "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," nor the catastrophic principle of their production. To the contrary.

"Spinoza," and the class of terms that I am using that name to name, do work for Marx, do the work that Marx *needs* in order to provide the "critique" of the discipline of political economy, inasmuch as they are *not* continuously identical or self-identical, that is, inasmuch as they are not just (like the value of commodities) doubly determined, but also over- and underdetermined by the "objects" they produce, and from which they take their sense and value. *Determinatio* may be *negatio*, since every determination excludes from the identity of the determined term, in this case terms like "production" or "consumption" or the name "Spinoza," whatever-predicates define *other* terms instead: but this ex-clusion also produces and depends upon terms, and stories, and surplus values, and further names, and further and incompatible dynamics of production. The index overproduces: its *thisness* is always also *this-and-this*-ness, or better, a *this-as-this*-ness (we recall the *als*-trick that Marx plays). A *dynamic* is autotelic or autopoetic, and also catastrophic, a fall, governed by rules that fall without the factory and the machine. Value accrues to the object as a result of the value-form that attaches dynamically to it, here and now, in this market and under these conditions, production and distribution costs and surplus-value reckoned against the drives of consumptive desire; but the shadow of other values also falls across the object, from different times than *this now*, future and past, and different markets than *this here.*

What, then, *is* the alternative to the discipline of political economy, and to the conceptualization of disciplinarity and objectuality attached to it, that Marx begins to sketch out? Let me close this chapter by giving it a name and a description carried on the shoulders, precisely, of "Spinoza."

Let's say that it is the catastrophic surplus of the object's *this*-ness with respect to its "continuous identity" that the name "Spinoza," a name built in 1857 about contradictory, even antinomial statements and drawing from different registers: religious and skeptical; cultural and not, philosophical and not; European and not; Jewish and Christian—it is this that "Spinoza" names for Marx. And the sort of identity that "Spinoza" seems almost uniquely, and certainly *representatively,* to exemplify at the time that Marx is drafting the 1857 "Introduction" had an established name by the time that Heinrich Hirsch Graetz began publishing, in 1848, the volumes of his *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*: the name marrano*, marrane*. "Die Inquisition," Graetz wrote,

> hatte damals noch keine Gewalt über sie [*die Marrane*], sie existierte noch nicht in Spanien. Aus diesen in Spanien gebliebenen Zwangstäuflingen bildete sich eine eigene Klasse, äußerlich Christen, innerlich Juden; man könnte sie

> Juden-Christen nennen. Von der christlichen Bevölkerung wurden sie aber mit mißtrauischem Auge betrachtet und als *Neuchristen* mit dem Spitznamen *Marranos* oder die *Verdammten* fast mit noch glühenderem Hasse als die treugebliebenen Juden umlauert, nicht etwa wegen ihrer heimlichen Liebe zum Judenthume, sondern wegen ihrer Abstammung, ihrer eifrigen Rührigkeit und Anstelligkeit. Diese Abneigung empfanden auch jene getauften Juden, welche gerne das Judenthum von sich abgestreift und nichts davon beibehalten hatten. Es waren weltlich gesinnte Menschen, welche Lebensgenüsse, Reichthümer, Ehren über jede Religion schätzten, oder Uebergebildete, welche durch die Philosophie zu Zweiflern geworden waren und daher jenes Bekenntniß vorzogen, welches sie über die engen Schranken der Judenheit hinausführte und ihnen eine weite Welt öffnete. Diese Klasse, welche schon früher kein Herz für das Judenthum hatte und nur aus Rücksichten oder einem gewissen Schamgefühl darin verharrte, war froh, daß ihr die Zwangstaufe auferlegt wurde, weil sie sich dadurch der Fesseln entschlagen und sich über Bedenklichkeiten hinwegsetzen konnte.
>
> (The Inquisition had no power over them, as it had not yet been established in Spain. These forced converts gradually formed themselves into a peculiar class, outwardly Christians, at heart Jews. You might call them Jewish-Christians. By the populace, who nicknamed them Marranos, or "The Damned," they were regarded with more distrust and hatred than the openly observant Jews, not because of their secret [*heimlisch*] fidelity to Judaism, but on account of their descent and inborn intelligence, energy, and skill. Baptized Jews, who had been glad to disencumber themselves of their Judaism, shared in these feelings of aversion. They were the worldlings who valued wealth, rank, and luxury above religion, or the over-educated whose philosophy had led them to skepticism, and whose selfishness induced them to welcome a change which brought them out of the narrow confines of a small community, and opened up a wider world to them. Their hearts had never been with Judaism, and they had adhered to it only out of respect or a certain compunction.)[47]

Marrane. In English, we say marrano after the original Spanish. With Graetz's help, we can now ask what the term meant in 1857, what Spanish, or Hebrew, or other languages it translated (as we will see, translation is at the heart of Marx's alternative to classic disciplinarity), and how it might have designated both that strange identity, "Spinoza," and those whose project it might be or might have been to make such identities, if they could still be called that, systematic devices for exacerbating the contradictions between established forms of determination. Or for bringing them to catastrophe.

When we remark that the contradictory identity that attaches to the

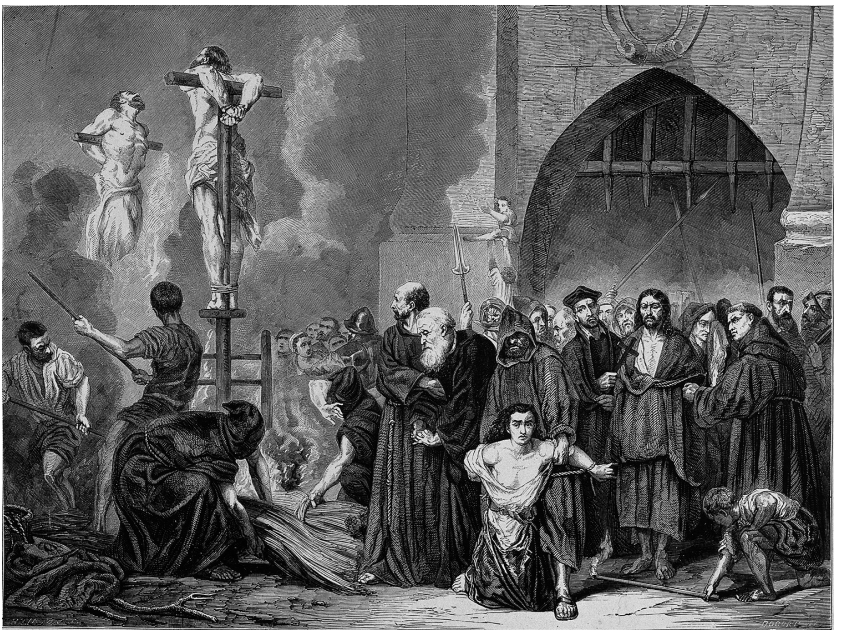


Figure 5. An auto-da-fé of the Spanish Inquisition and the execution of sentences by burning heretics on the stake in a market place. Wood engraving by Bocort after H. D. Linton. [s.n.][S.l.]: 22.5 × 29.7 cm. Wellcome Library, London V0041892.

name "Spinoza" is characteristic of the class to which certain historic figures, someone called Spinoza and someone called Marx, belonged—the class name *marrano*—we will first be referring to the identity that Spinoza shares, obscurely, with the community that expels him and perhaps even with Marx himself, whose Judaism too remains, if not secret, then at least encrypted. Spinoza, the *marrano*: the name reaches from scriptural anathema to the name for a barnyard animal. It works: it performs an interdiction and it names the prohibited object; it is used by Jews to characterize the "damned" who convert, however falsely, out of fear, and by non-Jews to designate the population they fear most: converts who bear secretly and invisibly the trace of an identity they retain, falsifying the sacrament of conversion, rendering invisible the mark of the profound difference between the community of Christian and its intimate, alien kin. Only Spinoza, *as a Jew,* could have "created" his system, the system of sentences of which *Spinozas Satz* is the eponym; only as an apostate could he have done so. I say that *marrano* designates an "obscure" identity, obscurely shared by Spinoza and Marx, because what *marrano* names is not an identity we can understand in the way

Von dem christelichen streyt geschehē
jm. M. CCCCC. vj. Jar zu Lißbona
ein haubt stat in Portigal zwischen den christen vnd newen chri
sten oder jüden/ von wegen des gecreutzigisten got.

Figure 6. "Von dem Christeliche / Streyt, kürtzlich geschehe / jm. M.CCCCC.vj Jar zu Lissbona / ein haubt stat in Portigal zwischen en christen und newen chri / sten oder juden, von wegen des gecreutzigisten [*sic*] got." Flugschrift, 1506.

in which we would understand the identity subtending logical propositions like *determinatio est negatio* (we would have to agree: *determinatio* is always identical to itself inasmuch as, in every case, *determinatio est negatio;* and symmetrically and reflexively, *negatio* is always *negatio* inasmuch as it is always the same as *determinatio*), or an ethnic, religious, or national identity one might be said to possess at one or another time. (A Jew is a Jew, in Spain in 1492; in Amsterdam in 1675; or in London in 1857.)

But what, then, is *marrano* identity, both as it might be *Spinoza's* identity, as it might name the defective concept of identity the name secretly furnishes Marx's logic and lexicon, and as it might serve to characterize the alternative to classic conceptions of disciplinarity that Marx begins to sketch? "Spinoza" is not only this or that historical figure we can point to here and now, to

one or another end (for instance, the end of legitimating a critique of the identity-propositions subtending the discipline of political economy). The name also names a cryptic identity: "Spinoza," in 1857, is *the* exemplar, a *marrano* with respect to the *marrano* tradition itself. *Marrano* is *not just* one in the series of contradictory determinations definitive of "Spinoza," *but also* the name that the cultural milieu would give to a disaggregated net of contradictory identity predicates bearing within them, among them, a secret name *for* their aggregation.

Recall the confounding clutter of notions that surrounds the term *marrano* when systematic efforts are made to provide the term with a *here* and a *now,* with a history, a history of uses, and a range of applications. Graetz writes:

> The word Marranos has not, it happens, been clarified up to this point. It is true that it was imagined to derive from *Maran atha*: but this expression was misinterpreted when it occurred in the New Testament, so this derivation also entails a misunderstanding. Portuguese Historians propose the following: the word *Marrano* comes from *maranatha,* that is, "God will come," and one indicates by means of that word, those who deny the coming of the Messiah. It became a name of denigration and scorn for those who knew/professed Judaism. Thus Llorente: "Jews used, amongst themselves and as a sign of damning or condemnation or as a curse, the Hebrew expression 'Marranos,' derived corruptly from from the words *Maran-atha,* 'God comes.' This use was the reason why ancient Christians called, derogatorily, this class of newly converted Jews the generation of *Marranos,* or the damned race." It's correct to say that *Marranos* means "those who attend," but not in reference to the phrase "God comes." The expression *Maran atha* or *Maranatha* is to be found in 1 *Corinthians,* toward the conclusion (16, 22). There it reads: "If someone does not love Jesus Christ, he is *Anathema* and *Maranatha,*" Εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ . . . Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ἤτω ἀνάθεμα, μαραναθά. The Syriac translation again thoughtlessly renders the expression by מרן אתא, "God comes." But what sense could the verses then possibly have? The word *Maranatha* is distinguished from the new Hebrew word "א Chaldaean form, תמרחמ, "you are banned," by pronouncing the word: *Anathema*.[48]

Marrano, the Castilian lexical tradition tells us, means someone who is "damned or excommunicated," "maldito o descomulgado," or "cochino," "a pig" (thus the 1734 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*), or as in Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana española,* "a new convert to Christianity, of whom we have a low opinion [*ruin concepto*], since he has converted falsely . . . Moors call a yearling pig 'marrano,' and it may be for this reason, and also because they do not eat pork, that the new convert is called

marrano" (el rezien conuertido al Christianismo, y tenemos ruin concepto del, por auerse convertido fingidamente. . . . Los Moros llaman al puerco de un año marrano, y pudo ser que al nuevamente conuertido por esta razon, y por no comer la carne del puerco, le llamassen marrano).[49] This is predictable, as far as it goes—forms of rhetorical animalization seem inseparable from practices of social exclusion in most cultures and lexicons. But the word *marrano* also has a peculiar kinship with the verb *Marrar*, "desviarse de lo recto" (to stray from the straight path), and with words that derive from that verb. In Nebrija's vocabulary of 1492, *marrar* is a synonym for the Latin *aberrare* (to wander, to stray, to err). *Marrar,* Covarrubias goes on to say, means "to miss, err." It is, he continues,

> An ancient Castilian word, from which may derive—despite what I said earlier—the term "marrano," used to indicate the Jew who did not convert sincerely and simply. The term *marrar* is a barbarism, and not used amongst courtly people, but it is quite proper. Some thus say, "poco le faltó, poco le marró," he just missed. Hence the word "*marro,*" a game in which a sign is made on the ground, and stones are thrown to see who comes closest to the mark. *Marrón* is the stone used in this game.
>
> (*Marrar* es *faltar*, vocablo antiguo Castellano; del qual por ventura [sin embargo de lo dicho] vino el nombre de Marrano, del Iudio que no se conuirtió llana y simplemente. El vocablo marrar es bárbaro, y no usado entre gente Cortesana, pero muy propio; y assi dizen, poco le marró, poco le faltó. De aqui se dixo marro, vn juego, que hincada vna señal en tierra, tiran al que da mas cerca el golpe del. Y marrón, la mesma piedra con que se tira.)

By 1734 the word *marro* also means, in Castilian, "a feint or swerve of the body, done so as not to be caught, and in order to trick [*burlar*] a pursuer . . . the absence of something in whole or in part, defeating [*burlar*] the hopes that had been held . . . *defectus,*" as well as "a game similar to the one called Moors and Christians," "el regate o hurto del cuerpo, que se hace para no ser cogido, y burlar al que persigue," "la falta de alguna cosa en todo o en parte, burlando la esperanza que se tenía concebida, . . . *defectus,*" and "un juego parecido al que llaman de Moros y Christianos": a kind of keep-away. A *defect*.

Bear two things in mind. In the first place, in the lexical system into which "Spinoza" falls, the name "Spinoza" and the term *marrano* designate not just an identity, even a biology (for instance, the physiology of a person who is nauseated by pork, as Covarrubias says was true of the first *conversos*), *but also* a lexical or a discursive function, strategy, or condition—the function

of mis-hitting, dodging, going and leading astray, defeating expectations, evading: everything that is indicated in Covarrubias's terms *defectus* and *burlar*, to trick, to evade, but also of course to seduce, as in Tirso de Molina's play *El burlador de Sevilla,* the origin of the Don Juan tradition. A particular relation to truth-production and to rule-following, as in the case of a game, is implied: a *marrano* is one who throws something, a *marrón*, or utters a statement—for instance, the statement "I am a Christian" or "I am a Jew"—and misses the mark, *marra*, whether deliberately (he lies or equivocates, he evades the mark, again *marrar*) or accidentally, *marrar* again. Covarrubias, we recall, says that a *marrano* is someone about whom we have a *ruin concepto*, a low opinion. To ask what a *marrano* is, then, means not only to ask what views or characteristics are held by this or that *marrano*, or what views or characteristics *marranos* as a group or an identity or a physiology might have held. It means also to note the term's relation to *defectiveness*, and to ask what protocols for rule-following, falsification and veridification, truth- and body-production it can usefully provide, when the *marrano* evades, secretes, seduces, tricks, *burla,* and renders *defective* normative approaches to truth-telling and truth discovery. What sort of language game is "marranism"? Does the designation *marrano* fit in the lexicon of our language? Does it fit in the system of falsification and veridification, truth- and body-production that we, or "Spinoza," or Marx, inhabit? In the academic disciplines that we currently profess? In some alternative conception of disciplinarity, offered sketchily by Marx?

Bear also in mind Covarrubias's odd, almost invisible joke regarding the word *marrano* as it concerns the coherence of the lexical field itself (and not just the place one or another word might occupy in that field). *Marrano* is the convert about whom we have a low opinion, inasmuch as we believe him to be insincere, to harbor traces of his old faith, to be other than he claims to be. He is called *marrano* adversatively because he does not eat the flesh of the pig: we call him by the name of what he least wants (to eat), if he is indeed true to the bad opinion, the *ruin concepto*, that we hold of him. He is called *marrano* because he does not want to be, eat, touch, resemble the *marrano*. He guards in hiding an identity that ruins, the Castilian is *arruinar,* the good concept we might have of him, and gives us instead a *ruin concepto* of him. *Concepto* here has both the sense of an opinion, and the more technical sense ("del verbo Latino *concipere, simul capere apprehendere*" (from the Latin *concipere, simul capere apprehendere*) that Covarrubias's dictionary has furnished: "El discurso hecho en el entendimiento, y despues executado, o con la lengua, o con la pluma" (A thought or expression formed in the understanding, and then made effective or actual either with the tongue, or with the pen).

And what about the word that modifies this opinion-concept-thought that "we" hold regarding the *marrano*, the word *ruin*? When Covarrubias says that "we" hold a *ruin concepto* of the *marrano*, what does he mean? Two things at least. That there is a community, and a community of opinion, regarding the *marrano*, whom "we" regard in the same way, of whom "we" have a *ruin concepto*. And that the Castilian word *ruin*, "hombre de mal trato, o cosa que no es buena" (a sinister, unpleasant man; a thing which is not good) comes not (as one might expect) from *ruina* (ruin, as in a ruined building), and from the Latin *ruina, ruendo* (this is Covarrubias's etymology for *ruina*) but, rather, "from the Hebrew *ruahh*, *malum esse,*" though the Hebrew he gives, רוע, does not appear to render correctly the Castilian sense he intends. His great predecessor, Antonio de Nebrija, makes the word *ruin* the equivalent of *pessimus* and *malignus*, without giving any etymology; Castilian lexicography (on the evidence, at any rate, of the institutional document intended to create and guard this "we" that Covarrubias addresses, the hoary *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, or *DRAE*) accepts Covarrubias's etymology, via the Hebrew, until 1884, when *ruin* is firmly fixed to Latin. The joke, if it is one: that Castilian harbors in itself traces of Hebrew, which surface symptomatically when the lexicographer seeks to characterize the man who has pretended to expunge Judaism from himself. The *concept* of Castilian, of a *Lengua castellana*, as Covarrubias's dictionary is called, is in this sense ruined for those who might intend to purge the language of *marrano* traces. The disciplinary closure provided by an agreed, systematic lexicon harbors exiled, treacherous, unconverted, untranslatable terms. We recall that Covarrubias, Castilian's first and greatest systematizer, was himself from a *converso* family, that his father and brother were suspected of bearing traces of Judaism, that he may himself have suffered professionally from the suspicion. A cryptic joke.

For now, and to close. A cryptic joke links translation, the figure of the *marrano,* and Marx's system, or pseudosystem, of dynamic and defective objects. I opened this chapter on the classic form of identity that, I suggested, underlies identity-propositions like the ones that Marx finds in the philosophy of political economy. The catastrophic fall *from* the machinic autopoetics of such disciplinarity, and *into* overproduction and overvaluation amounted also to the disruption of the circuit linking modern disciplinarity's discursive leg, its anthropological leg, and its set of agreed self-representations. But disrupting this sovereign circuit runs a danger. Marx's critique of political economy puts in its place a weakly systematic field of defective and dynamic concepts, catastrophically related, suffering in the shadow of the index. If—as we are accustomed to understand—disciplinarily

determined concepts travel, translated, on the wings of agreed norms and abstract value-forms (money, the subsumed labor-value form), across natural languages, markets, and frontiers—then how, if at all, will Marx's dynamic concepts, his *marrano* concepts, travel? How, under the accelerating regime of global capital, will we translate the dynamic concepts necessary for gathering together and thinking, then regulating, modifying, displacing, or destroying the catastrophe of capital? What befalls in translation produces not just a surplus of surplus value but catastrophic *debt*—unforgivable, disabling, permanent. I'll now turn to this articulation of the catastrophes of credit capital and translation.

3. Necrophilology

> Which is more reasonable, to stop the machine when the works have done the task demanded of them, or to let it run on until it stands still of its own accord—in other words, is destroyed?
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*

> [Ho]w it is that we still refuse to be comforted for those who we nevertheless maintain are dwelling in unspeakable bliss; why all the living so strive to hush all the dead; wherefore but the rumor of a knocking in a tomb will terrify a whole city. All these things are not without their meanings.
>
> —Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*

The problem that the general equivalent poses to Marx's theory of value stems from two sources.[1] The first is the theory's first moment, preceding and setting under way what Alfred Sohn-Rethel calls Marx's "commodity abstraction," and in specific from the requirement that *any commodity whatever* may pass from the field of relative valuation (of value that pertains to its use, here and now, to a concrete end) into the role of coin-of-the-realm in a circuit of exchange, of general equivalent, of money.[2] Whatever-commodity steps uncertainly into the abstract, general shape that awaits it, there to lose every particular relation to other commodities in use, but to gain correspondingly—a retroactive sense of having-been-destined for that waiting shape and role, value *as* the general form of value through which all things, made and unmade, thought and unthought, must pass henceforth. The messianism of the commodity: when it is touched with the golden hand of abstraction, whatever-commodity reveals itself to have been, always and already, the *singular* bearer of universality.[3]

The second is to be found in the theory's last moment: the requirement that whatever-commodity, in its abstract form and shorn of its relations to a moment, a place, and a use, *must* translate its ghostly universality back into any-other-particular commodity and indeed into *all* commodities inasmuch as they are such, rendering them recognizable to themselves, to each other, and to markets because they are likewise bearers of that ghostly annunciation. General equivalence rests upon this general analogy and upon a consequent, generalized principle of *translatability*—this much is well enough known. It rests also upon a theology of universal incarnation and universal resurrection (every man, Messiah; every commodity the bearer of the abstract form

of value).[4] Every negation, every limit, every little death imagined as the sacrificial step toward abstract life.[5] The philosophy of general equivalence is necrophilic, and trails with it the cluster of customary necrophilological concepts and techniques: prosopography, prosopopoeia, apostrophe ("Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!").[6]

Four questions take shape around this contradiction. My purpose in this chapter is to show how the strange, silent soundscape of Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" allows us to tack toward them.

The first question. Not only may any commodity step into the abstract role of the general equivalent, but because any object may, in principle, reveal itself over the course of time to be value-carrying, and thus to work like and as a commodity (or rather, like a commodity and as a commodity does, did, or will do, at a time and under specific historic conditions), *any object* at hand may step, according to laws not given in the object and not given necessarily just now, at this moment when I am considering it, into the role of commodity, thence into the role of general equivalent.

This ontological uncertainty has obvious consequences for the domains of ethics and politics, bearing on how we conceive of ethical singularity on one hand, and of political sovereignty on the other.

So, second. Any other stands before me, and my responsibility pertains to that singular subject and to that particular state of affairs, to that particular stance—who and which, however, may well come to stand in for a class or a generality, and to whom I should thus also respond as I would, not to *this* singular subject or state of affairs alone, but to these inasmuch as my response might obtain generally, or prove regulative with regard to many other subjects and states of affairs to whom these singular ones stand in a relation of exemplary equivalence: the general *ethical* equivalent. (We experience the discomfort of this situation analytically as well as phenomenologically: that's what the awkward marriage of contingency and necessity in my phrase expresses, that because any-other *may* come to be part of a class, I *must* or *should* respond to him or her with that possibility before me, *as if*.)

Third. As for the political domain, consider the minimal properties typically attributed to a democratic regime. A majority expresses the will to invest this-or-that political agent or institution with authority to act in certain domains, in its place, in its interests—with the understanding that another agent or institution may replace this first, under conditions that are not intrinsic to this moment, to the current definition of this majority's interests, or to the agent or institution. And: *any* interest, or *any* holder of interest, has access formally to the delegation of his or her interest to another, who will have standing to act for him or her. Conditions obtaining (consideration

of merit, history, formal procedures felicitously followed, and so on: these conditions are not fully given at any historical moment), any political agent or institution could be invested with such authority; any one could *lose* it or be shorn of it. Neither of these properties obtains in aristocracies, in charismatic movements of a populist stripe, in regimes of force: in *tyrannies.* That this-or-that individual or institution can stand for my interest, on my act; that any-interest and any-holder of such an interest rises to the grace of representability: these are the general *political* equivalents on which we balance the concept of democracy. The characteristic, almost thermodynamic drift toward identifying the ephemeral authority-to-act with the actor standing in that place and toward defining an "interest" and the "holder of an interest" in terms of representativity (an "interest" in this or that situation is what another can represent, to another, in my place: here Jacques Rancière's advocacy for the "part of those who have no part" becomes pertinent) are on this account more than accidental defects of procedural and representative democracy. ("Accidental defects" explain, as a matter of historical circumstance, say a circumstance we could call decolonization or its failure, the difficulty of establishing genuinely ephemeral, technical bureaucracies; of evading charismatic or demagogic populism; and the nonrecognition of individuals and groups as even potential bearers of representable interests.) These defects in the domain of politics, like the modal discomforts pertaining to the ethical situation, like the problem of the general equivalent on which I opened, are not only accidental.

Fourth and finally is precisely the nature of this "thermodynamic drift," this entropism. We have before us, again: the asymmetry between the humility, the abjection, of whatever-commodity, whatever-object, whatever-other, whatever-interest; and the sovereign position of the general equivalent. And also: the means, forces, rules, tropisms or entropisms by which whatever-commodity, object, other, or interest steps into, and can then step or be brought out of, its sovereign role.

Our questions turn to the abjection of whatever-commodity, but also to the sublimity of the general equivalent. We're concerned now with the Messianism of the commodity; but also with the Messianism of *every* commodity. How do we approach the transformation of one into the other? And why does it matter, today? As to the first, the languages of strategy, hydraulics, contingency and necessity, of translation, of exemplarity, even of aesthetic equilibrium, suggest themselves, their number and difference an indication of general, productive failure, of a lack of terms, of missing concepts perhaps. And as to the second, the matter of value—whether it's imagined as relative, intrinsic, or general; whether it's determined by demand

or indexed to an abstract term; whether it's taken to wax and wane with small local desires or global trends—is inseparable today, in the era of equity and of cognitive capital, not just from epistemological but also from *ethical* and *political* concepts. Lacking the terms, concepts, even the story lines to understand the way value accrues, we find ourselves unable to consider classically ethical or classically political questions: what it means to hold an interest in common, or to agree in common on the value of this or that object, commodity, disposition, or institution; whether forms of association or of institutionalization may be found or built that entertain a relation to markets, but are or may be, or may be made to be, antagonistic to the verticalization of wealth and political capital that seems inseparable from capitalist economics generally, and from equity and cognitive capitalism in particular.

Let's return for now to the field of political economy, allowing the cognate epistemological and ethical matters to remain close to hand, never letting their murmuring voices out of our hearing entirely. How we should think of the "general" and the "index," of the relation between these two terms (which are not quite synonyms), of the becoming-general and becoming-sovereign of the value of an abject whatever-commodity—these seem to me the most pressing tasks today, whether our field is axiology, literary criticism, political philosophy, or the economics of globalization.

The difficulties I've raised briefly disable us: the problem of the general equivalent remains untouched. That these difficulties arise on such different levels suggests that the way we've analyzed the fading of the problem of the general equivalent or of the value-index conceals a conceptually much more problematical node. It is to this node that I now turn. Recall Melville's mysterious and immensely provocative story "Bartleby, the Scrivener." It narrates the imaginary birth, the emergence in the imaginary, of modern equity and cognitive capitalism.

Here is a section from the very end of the story. The narrator searches for Bartleby:

> I again obtained admission to the Tombs, and went through the corridors in quest of Bartleby; but without finding him. "I saw him coming from his cell not long ago," said a turnkey, "maybe he's gone to loiter in the yards." So I went in that direction. "Are you looking for the silent man?" said another turnkey, passing me.
>
> "Yonder he lies—sleeping in the yard there. 'Tis not twenty minutes since I saw him lie down."
>
> The yard was entirely quiet. It was not accessible to the common prisoners. The surrounding walls, of amazing thickness, kept off all sounds behind them.

> The Egyptian character of the masonry weighed upon me with its gloom. But a soft imprisoned turf grew underfoot. The heart of the eternal pyramids, it seemed, wherein, by some strange magic, through the clefts, grass-seed, dropped by birds, had sprung.[7]

It's next to impossible to say anything that is both new and interesting about this work, or indeed about these terrible, devastating lines. The story has been the subject of a great number of subtle and rigorous interpretations—I remind you of Giorgio Agamben's essay on potentiality in "Bartleby"; of Maurice Blanchot's remarkable analysis of Bartleby's *passivity,* in *The Writing of the Disaster*; of Gilles Deleuze's magnificent analysis of Bartleby's "formula" collected in *Critique et clinique*; and many others.[8] In many ways, "Bartleby" is the standard against which a particular strain of political philosophy measures itself, a text that is enigmatic, among other things, in being written by an *American*, and in being set at the very heart of the monstrous engine of American capitalism: a story of Wall Street. One could put it more provocatively: "Bartleby, the Scrivener" operates as a sort of mute general equivalent allowing the fields of literary history, political philosophy, American studies, ethics, epistemology, rhetorical reading, and so on to be brought into contact with one another, their relative value assessed, indexed, compared, translated.

My remarks then join a river of glosses on "Bartleby." I hope to draw your attention to a peculiarity that has, I think, gone unremarked about the story—and which concerns the way in which and by what means the conception of value intrinsic to equity and cognitive capitalism is established *in* the text and *for* the work. Relative value in "Bartleby" gives way to a general standard of value found in the apparent silence of the debtor's prison, in the Tombs, where Bartleby meets his end, which is of course the end we will all meet. Of course; it goes without saying; it hardly merits speaking or writing; it's barely worth a whisper to insist that Bartleby's end is also our own, every human's end. In this respect, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" follows a sketchy arc leading from the value of words—the controlled value of the sound of certain words, for instance the call of a certain lawyer's voice: "'Bartleby! quick, I am waiting'" (11)—to the value, as a general index, of "silence." Neither of these endpoints will be quite what it appears to be, and Melville takes a different path between them than we might expect—but in outline the story might be said to move stylistically from the rather involuted prose in which the narrator opens, through to the austere sentences in which he describes Bartleby's body almost at the end of the story, and to the silence to which his last words consign Bartleby and humanity. "Bartleby" might then

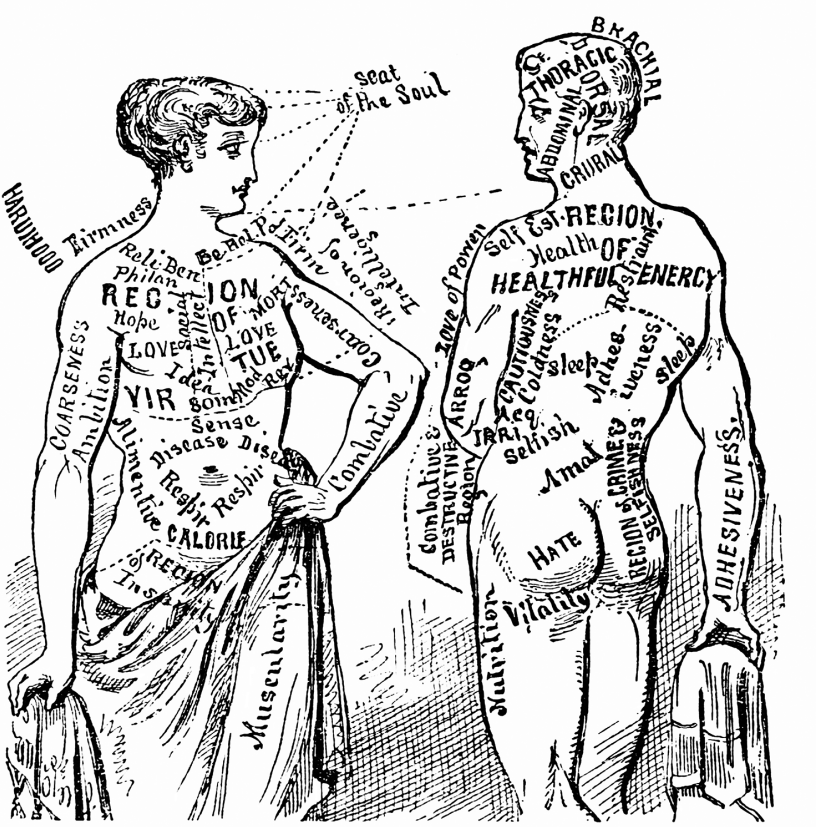


Figure 7. "Outlines of Sarcognomy," in Edward Bliss Foote, *Sammy Tubbs, the Boy Doctor, and "Sponsie," the Troublesome Monkey*, vol. 4 of *Science in Story* (New York: Murray Hill, 1874), 122.

move from focusing on individual, even individuated, experience, to setting before its reader a concept of the general or the collective life; it might be understood to move *from* expressing value in the explicit, definitive, and decisive language indicated by a legally attested signature (on a bond, a mortgage, a contract, a will, and so on), *to* expressing it in the doubly lost "dead letters" the clerk is said, perhaps, to have sorted in the dead letter office. The architecture and the dynamics of Melville's story furnish his readers with models for thinking how an abject whatever-commodity, an everyman, a whatever-scrivener, can, under the most singular of circumstances, become the clamorous, sovereign tongue that speaks in the heart of Wall Street: its index, its principle of general equivalence. What all humanity shares—death,

conceived as the silence of the tomb and of the Tombs—becomes the device prompting and allowing us to transform a particular identity and a particular, even singular, value, the identity of whatever-scrivener and his value, the value of his life, into a stand-in for humanity. But just how?

I'll return in brief to the great and awful lines in which Bartleby's body re-enters the narrator's prose at the end of the story, but let me remind you here of the ringing tones in which the narrator describes himself at the story's opening. "I am," the story begins,

> a rather elderly man . . . The late John Jacob Astor, a personage little given to poetic enthusiasm, had no hesitation in pronouncing my first grand point to be prudence, my next, method. I do not speak it in vanity, but simply record the fact that I was not unemployed in my profession by the late John Jacob Astor, a name which, I admit, I love to repeat, for it hath a rounded and orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion. I will freely add that I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion.

The sketchy architecture that I laid out for you above in the register of value (passing *from* the relative or particular interest one singular scrivener, whatever-scrivener, might have to a quiet and conservative lawyer on a moody Manhattan morning, *to* the claim that this interest or value characterizes the universal, the human, is general—our general equivalent) can now be approached from a slightly different perspective. The narrator's round, Cartesian assertion of identity shifts by the story's end to become a comment regarding the general class to which the narrator belongs, alongside Bartleby, the narrator and the other inmates in the law practice, and the buzzing masses on Broadway and Wall Street. We step from "I" to the story's last word, "humanity"; from a singular to a collective identity; from the narrator's "I am," "my first grand point *is*," "I do not speak," "I was not," "I admit," "I love," "I add," to the subjectless, general exclamations that close the story. It reads as though Melville's narrator were opening by rehearsing the logical table of a school primer in elementary logic, enumerating first-person statements and claims (affirmations whose subject is what one famous primer of the time, Richard Whatley's *Elements of Logic* of 1826, calls "a Singular-term [that] stands for *one* individual, as 'Caesar,' 'the Thames'") before passing in the story to the register of the universal, or at least the generically general, or to what Whatley's primer calls "Common-terms . . . that may stand for any of an indefinite number of individuals, which are called its *significates, ie.,* can be *applied* to any of them, as comprehending them in its *single signification;* as 'man,' 'river,' 'great.'"[9] "Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!": singular term, common term. The story moves from a single or singular predicate of existence, as in "I am," to a class or common term, whether it

is "a man" or "humanity," through various seemingly complementary ways of asserting identity (by negation, including the famous double negatives in which the narrator expresses himself—and which become, or seem to become, affirmations that do not affirm; simple predications; performative speech-acts like commands, which set in place a subject, an object, and their relation; and then "preferences," which turn out to be something quite other than speech-acts establishing subjective positions or identities).

The class term, when it arrives at last, when it arrives in the form not of "man" but of "humanity," only steps on stage when the singular existential predicator, the copulative "is," has passed out of the story. From the overproduction of logical operators that we find in the narrator's opening lines, then, to an ascetic elimination of the copula: "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!" Bartleby has passed from the story; so has the copulative "is" that links his name, as a singular example, to the class term: Bartleby is (not) humanity. What the fiction achieves, we suspect at this stage, is to transfer the simple assertion of "is" into our imagination: it is the reader, faced with the mute parataxis of the narrator's last exclamation, who supplies the yoking, the linking of the whatever-scrivener to the universal human. "Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!," the narrator exclaims, and we don't at first know whether Melville's narrator is asserting the identity of the particular name "Bartleby" and the general term "humanity;" or whether he is contrasting them; or whether he is establishing their equivalence with respect to a separate standard of value (Bartleby, like all humans, is mortal); or what, indeed, the logical form is that underlies that exclamation. "Is," the basic assertion of existence, has passed from the story, as Bartleby himself has done, and into our imagination. (Whately: "The *copula* . . . indicates the act of Judgment, as by it the Predicate is affirmed or denied of the Subject."[10]) An elided or a silenced copula hovers, ghostly, in the narrator's exclamation, and it is resurrected or voiced in our imagination, which will confess to us, silently, that yes, indeed, "Bartleby" *is* (a stand-in for) "humanity." As is the narrator who witnesses his passion, as are we who read this tale of Wall Street. Yes, we say, silently assenting, copying silently the narrator's implied assertion. Yes: death, conceived as silence, the silence of the tomb and of the Tombs, becomes the device that transforms a particular identity, the identity of whichever-scrivener and also the identity of whichever-narrator, into stand-ins for humanity.

Of course, the movements I've just traced, the story's production of silence as the index-commodity and its production of logical universals out of first-person, indexical statements don't always proceed in hand or in time.[11] But let me firm up this architectural scheme, before suggesting its limits and passing to Melville's alternative: to *necrophilology*.

Let's say, for now, that "Bartleby," that "Story of Wall Street," is concerned not only to show its readers the costs of displacing a singular identity by the abstract class term, but also to establish, and to set out the moral, conceptual and aesthetic limits of, what I've been calling equity and cognitive capitalism—forms of capitalism structured by the messianic contradictions of general equivalence. Melville achieves this description-critique of the poetics of equity capital by describing a different kind of poetics, a poetics related to sound. I have in mind, of course, the hustle and bustle of urban space and of Wall Street in particular, and on the other side the silence of the Tombs to which Bartleby is consigned at the end of "Bartleby, the Scrivener." Between the noise of Wall Street and all that implies, and the silence of pure debt and pure death, as the Tombs appear to symbolize, stands the aural figure that most interests Melville, and where he locates the most searching definition of necrophilology: the figure of rumor.

Let me return to Bartleby. Our narrator has tried to chase the recalcitrant scrivener out of the offices because Bartleby has not only ceased scrivening, but has begun to scare off clients. Desperate at Bartleby's strange, and strangely effective, form of passive resistance, the narrator charges out of the office debating with himself—

> After breakfast, I walked down town, arguing the probabilities *pro* and *con*. One moment I thought it would prove a miserable failure, and Bartleby would be found all alive at my office as usual; the next moment it seemed certain that I should find his chair empty. And so I kept veering about. At the corner of Broadway and Canal-street, I saw quite an excited group of people standing in earnest conversation.
>
> "I'll take odds he doesn't," said a voice as I passed.
>
> "Doesn't go?—done!" said I, "put up your money."
>
> I was instinctively putting my hand in my pocket to produce my own, when I remembered that this was an election day. The words I had overheard bore no reference to Bartleby but to the success or nonsuccess of some candidate for the mayoralty. In my intent frame of mind, I had, as it were, imagined that all Broadway shared in my excitement, and were debating the same question with me. I passed on, very thankful that the uproar of the street screened my momentary absent-mindedness. (23)

This is a wonderful description, in a comic key, of the way in which the mind can be both excessively present and "intent," and somehow missing ("absent-mindedness"): this double condition, for Melville's narrator, constituting the *imagination*, supplying an imaginary collective identity ("*all* Broadway . . . debating . . . with me") and an imaginary collective economic

space, the space of the bet. It anticipates the way the matter is taken up in the story's last lines, if my account of them is right, if indeed they serve to translate to the reader the burden of imagining a copula linking singular to collective identities, of translating notions of particular value into abstract general equivalents. There, at the end, a "rumor," and not the "uproar of the street," awakens the narrator's speculative imagination, and apparently his readers' as well. We add another architectural determination to the cluster we have noted already—not just the movement from "uproar" and noise to the silence of tomb and Tombs, from the proper name to the common, from a particular value to a general equivalence, but the movement from a comic to a tragic prompt for our imagination. The argument that Bartleby, translated, becomes a figure, a metonym, for "humanity" stands on the "rumor" the narrator offers in conclusion—the "rumor" concerning Bartleby's occupation as a clerk in the dead letter office. But it is suggested already on the street, at the corner of Broadway and Canal, when our narrator too quickly translates what he hears a voice utter into the register of his internal preoccupations, as if every voice on Broadway echoed his thoughts, and every "person" he passed were, potentially, Bartleby, the representative reduction of "person" to "voice" anticipating and hanging over the story's close, the subsumption of a singular voice in the clamorously general concept of "humanity."

But perhaps this is too wonderful: perhaps our narrator's prose is too good; perhaps neither a comic, nor a tragic imagination will succeed in translating entirely, and hence "screening," whatever it is about the "mind" that is at once excessively present and quite absent when we try to follow the story's dynamics. So in order to supply the alternative figure that Melville sketches for us, let me now route my argument *through* translation, and take up a different language than Melville's, a different moment, and a different set of concerns.

It's now 1944. The European war grinds to its disastrous close. Jorge Luis Borges publishes his translation of Melville's story, "Bartleby, el escribiente," with a brief, principally biographical preface that also treats *Moby Dick*, and which has the main critical merit of linking "Bartleby" to Kafka's *The Trial*, where as in Bartleby, Borges says, "the incredible lies in the way characters act, rather than in the events of the story. In *The Trial*," he continues, "the protagonist is judged and executed by a tribunal with no authority whatsoever, whose rigorous sentence he obeys without any protest. More than half a century before, Melville gave us the strange case of Bartleby, who not only acts against all logic, but forces others to be his accomplices as well."[12] This is not, perhaps, the best analysis of "Bartleby," but it has a few suggestive features—among others, the stress Borges will place upon the illogicality

of the character's actions, as well as the appeal to the "incredible." When Borges follows Melville's narrator to the corner of Canal and Broadway a number of curious things happen. This is how he translates the lines I just cited in English.

> Después del almuerzo, me fui al centro, discutiendo las probabilidades pro y contra. A ratos pensaba que sería un fracaso miserable y que encontraría a Bartleby en mi oficina como de costumbre; y en seguida tenía la seguridad de encontrar su silla vacía. Y así seguí titubeando. En la esquina de Broadway y Canal, vi a un grupo de gente muy excitada, conversando seriamente.
>
> —Apuesto a que . . .—oí decir al pasar.
>
> —¿A que no se va?, ¡ya está!—dije—: ponga su dinero. Instintivamente metí la mano en el bolsillo para vaciar el mío, cuando me acordé que era día de elecciones. Las palabras que había oído no tenían nada que ver con Bartleby, sino con el éxito o fracas de algún candidato para intendente. En mi obsession, yo había imaginado que todo Broadway compartía mi excitación y discutía el mismo problema. Seguí, agradecido al bullicio de la calle, que protegía mi distracción.[13]

Borges's translation is not entirely accurate, though what might seem immediately to be errors turn out to be examples of idiomatic difference—for instance, the substitution of the word that Castilian Spanish uses for "lunch," *almuerzo*, for Melville's "breakfast," or the (again to the speaker of Castilian Spanish) equally perplexing translation of "mayor" as *intendente*, when the word *alcalde* lies at hand and is in current use. Argentine Spanish rather than Castilian, though; and coupled words, *intendente, alcalde,* and *desayuno*, *almuerzo,* in which the rumor of languages sounds confusedly—Latin, Arabic, even the chimeric *almuerzo,* composed of both: the Arabic particle *al-* and the Latin *morsus,* a bite. It is unexpected, of course, to hear a small clamor of languages break out where a silent protagonist ("Are you looking for the silent man?" asks one of the Tombs' turnkeys as the story closes—but the word "silent" attaches from the story's opening to the scrivener) is being translated—but of just what might this incongruity be a symptom?

Borges's translation is critically different from Melville's text in three ways. Each bears on the story's meditation on the *costs* of translation, in the domains we have been touching upon: logical, philological, characterological, economic. And, of course, political—the translation of a proper name into a class term telling, also, the story of the politicization of singular identities.

Recall. Our "veering," baffled narrator sees a group of excited people, and when he passes them, "'I'll take odds he doesn't,' sa[ys] a voice." Borges's narrator, in contrast, hears no "voice." Borges's "—Apuesto a que . . .—oí

decir al pasar.—¿A que no se va?, ¡ya está!—dije" turns "a voice" into "I heard say in passing," *oí decir al pasar*. It's a small difference, but not a trivial one: for Melville's narrator, the pressure of thought and uncertainty, the comic imagination poised between intent over presence and absence, converts "people" into "voices" alone. The metonym substituting the voice for the person who articulates a phrase by means of the voice is conventional, not just in English and in Spanish, but of course in other traditions as well. It is, indeed, a substitution foundational for a conception of participatory politics of the sort the scene represents—the civic discussion of candidates for elected office, carried out by "people" whose interests are manifested in voice and vote: *vox populi,* the ancient phrase goes, *vox Dei*.[14] But this substitution of voice for person has, in the context of the story, a peculiar shape. We remember that the hustle and bustle of Wall Street has the effect of taking from Bartleby his voice. In the Tombs, in the tomb, Bartleby becomes "the silent man"; there, the "voice" that his silence is granted, the symbolic register in which it is articulated, is seemingly not "voiced" in the register of politics, participatory or not, but of religious allegory. But *here,* on the corner of Canal and Broadway, matters are different. Here, Melville's English tells a story about the social, the explicitly *political*, context in which a singular figure (Bartleby, or a candidate for the mayoralty) becomes the occasion for a collective transaction—a bet, a vote, the call of a voice, an image produced and held collectively. That this social translation of the preference expressed by a voice into its abstract condition or its general equivalent involves the death of one singular scrivener speaks to the classically tragic genre in which the story appears to belong. And Borges's translation, perhaps because it is too "intent" or too "absent-minded," drops Melville's "voice" and thus screens from its readers the tragic translation into the political domain that the scene stages in Melville's prose.

So, at any rate, it would appear. Matters, however, are not this simple. Here is the second thing that Borges's translation of "Bartleby" shows us, by getting wrong what Melville's narrator says.

We're back on the street. Our "veering" narrator speaks up to take a bet whose object he misunderstood—only to realize his mistake as his hand reaches into his pocket to pull out his stake in the bet. Abashed, he "passe[s] on, very thankful that the uproar of the street screened [his] momentary absent-mindedness." We are used to screens in "Bartleby, the Scrivener." A screen separates our narrator from his employee, who sits behind it, palely writing or not, depending whether we are at the beginning or toward the end of the story. The screen becomes, partway, Bartleby's screen; it stands in for him when the narrator turns toward it to address, to it, words intended

for the pale scrivener concealed behind it. The uproar of the street not only screens our narrator's error, in confusing the object of the voices' bet with the clamor of thoughts within his head: this uproar places him, like Bartleby, behind a screen. The topology is elegantly and subtly sketched: the narrator's hand, arrested at the pocket; the object of the narrator's thought, arrested in its externalization, arrested before becoming the object of the public, even civic bet. The narrator, identified with the scrivener who was moving out, from behind the screen of the narrator's imagination and out onto the street, now moves back within his own imagination. The screen that stood between thought and its object has slipped: thought thinks itself within itself: the narrator's "absent-mindedness" is something more—it is, simultaneously, the record of the mind's presence to itself, unscreened, immediate.

This is not what Borges hears, however, or at any rate it is not what his Spanish renders for us, as if on a screen. Where Melville's narrator "passe[s] on, very thankful that the uproar of the street screened [his] momentary absent-mindedness," Borges's narrator says that he "Seguí, agradecido al bullicio de la calle, que protegía mi distracción." Spanish cannot make the word for "screen," *biombo*, into a verb, "to screen"—Spanish does not have *biombar*—so Borges chooses instead one of the possible functions of the screen, and substitutes that in place of the screen itself: the narrator is grateful that the uproar protects, *protege*, his distraction or absent-mindedness. This is a very good compromise indeed, inasmuch as it allows Borges to place before his reader an important ambiguity that can seem to stand in for Melville's demanding topology, simultaneously internal and external, a mind and an imagination both absent from and excessively present to itself, the screen between thought and object impassable as well as absent. "Proteger mi distracción" in this case can mean that the narrator's absent-mindedness, his *distracción,* is protected from discovery by others, that it is hid behind a screen, like a shameful secret; and it can mean that his absent-mindedness, his *distracción*, is preserved and protected, as if absent-mindedness were the kernel of the narrator's being, the genuine and definitive, but ephemeral and vulnerable, core of his subjectivity. Absent-mindedness, *distracción,* may be screened from sight out of shame, or protected out of solicitude. The epistemological register on which Melville's complex topology operates has been replaced by an affective one. It is no longer knowledge, the mind's knowledge of its objects and itself, that is at issue, but love: self-love, the narcissistic screening of one's ego-ideal. Philanthropy. Philology.

Finally, and perhaps most revealingly—something that Borges's translation manages to bring out from behind the screen of the narrator's self-love. Here is Melville again:

> After breakfast, I walked downtown, arguing the probabilities pro and con. One moment I thought it would prove a miserable failure, and Bartleby would be found all alive at my office as usual; the next moment it seemed certain that I should find his chair empty. And so I kept veering about. At the corner of Broadway and Canal Street, I saw quite an excited group of people standing in earnest conversation.
>
> "I'll take odds he doesn't," said a voice as I passed.
>
> "Doesn't go?—done!" said I, "put up your money." (23)

When Borges translates this minimal exchange of exclamations—the voice's "I'll take odds he doesn't" and our narrator's answering "'Doesn't go?—done!' said I, 'put up your money,'" he writes "En la esquina de Broadway y Canal, vi a un grupo de gente muy excitada, conversando seriamente.—Apuesto a que . . .—oí decir al pasar.—¿A que no se va?, ¡ya está!—dije—: ponga su dinero." Now the difference is remarkable: the "voice" that Melville's narrator overhears bets on the negative, and it is left for the narrator to supply the object—the "going" of the scrivener. But Borges's voice says much less: his translation subtracts the negative, and leaves merely the naked *bet*: "Apuesto a que . . . ," "I bet that . . ." Here Borges has heard something that Melville's narrator hasn't quite made out, not here, not yet. For the hustle and bustle, the "uproar," the aural confusion of Wall Street that our narrator is evoking on election day is also the hustle and bustle, the aural environment, of what we should call early equity capitalism—an environment in which information circulates not only as sanctioned, legitimated, verifiable, and *secured* articulations, but also in the form of the promise, the tip, the bid, the secret, the rumor, all affecting the sorts of controlled bets we call the equities market—the former eventuating in the sorts of "bonds, and mortgages, and title deeds" in which our narrator's practice specializes, the latter in risky, speculative, and exposed commitments. Rumor—what the voice, unattached to the utterer of the statement—conveys, that supplement to the formal structure of information delivery, is the great fear and the great resource of equity capitalism.[15]

(Recall Marx's column about "The Charter of the East India Company," published in the *New-York Daily Tribune* in June 1853, just a few months before "Bartleby" appeared: "The charter of the East India Company expires in 1854. Lord John Russell has given notice in the House of Commons, that the Government will be enabled to state, through Sir Charles Wood, their views respecting the future Government of India, on the 3d of June. A hint has been thrown out in some ministerial papers, in support of *the already credited public rumor*, that the Coalition have found the means of reducing even

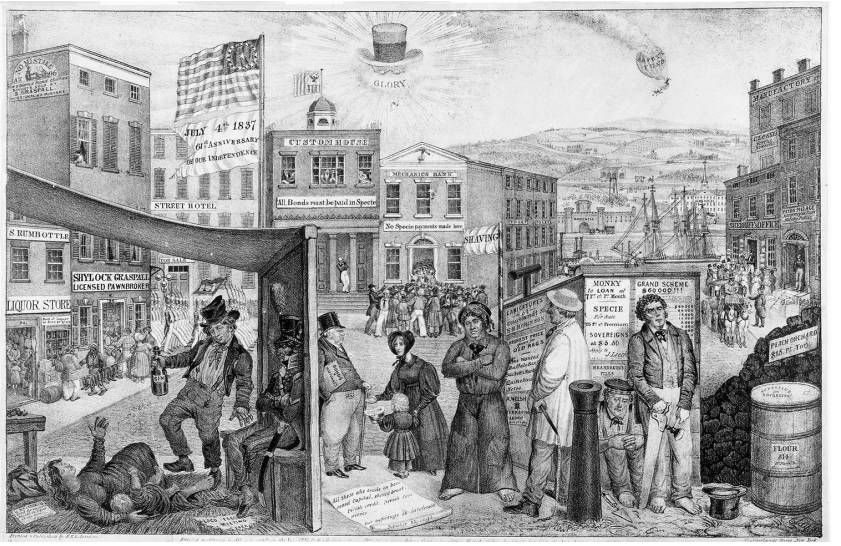


Figure 8. Edward Williams Clay, "The Times Panic." Printed and published by H. R. Robinson, 52 Courtlandt Street, New York, July 1837. Lithograph on woven paper; 32.7 × 48.4 cm, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=530402.

this colossal Indian question to almost Lilliputian dimensions."[16] Or consider this bit of news about "the firm Marshall & Self—better known to the vulgar as the 'Original Butter-Cake Dick's,'" reported on November 1, 1854, in the *New York Daily Times* under the heading "Another Painful Rumor—Wall Street Again Alarmed." I turn to it for its *general,* exemplary value: it is precisely not a *singular* case or expression. My argument about singular terms and class terms is also an argument about historiography. "There was," the *Daily Times* columnist reports,

> another of those disagreeable—in fact, painful—rumors which have of late so much perplexed the moneyed interest of the country, afloat in Wall street yesterday. . . . Notwithstanding appearances last night were calculated to excite the worst fears, we trust the rumor will yet be shown to have had, if at all, at least but a temporary foundation. And yet trusting is the very poorest ground for hope in mercantile affairs. In fact, it is stated that trusting, without discrimination and too much, was one of the main causes of the suspension of the House which we chronicle in deep sorrow.

A droll version of the "foundations" of mercantile affairs in Wall Street: the dialectic of *rumor* and *trust*, of unlicensed excitation and wild trade on one

hand, and "trust," belief, and credit on the other. Both unsecured and as-yet uncredited—*rumor*, unsecured by any authoritative, credible name standing behind the wild voice; *trust*, excessive trust, unsecured by any collateral, only made tolerable, predictable, useful to the machinery of Wall Street by the formal and formalizing instruments at the disposal of an "eminently *safe* man" like Melville's narrator: "bonds and mortgages and title-deeds").

Rumor "perplexes" Wall Street because it adds or subtracts value mysteriously to the matter traded there, commodities, institutions, what have you—and this perplexity will generate compensatory, formalizing offices and institutions, "avocations" (the narrator's play on words is fine) as well as sinecures like the "good old offices . . . of a Master of Chancery") serving to regulate that mysterious instability, among other things. Rumor *also* "perplexes" the street much more profoundly, however, and it is to this that Borges's translation attends just here, before Melville's English-speaking narrator quite hears, in the uproar of the street, the ring of what's at stake, as if the translator reads from the story's conclusion backward, with the benefit of the end before him. The claim, in Borges's Spanish, is now stronger: rumor cannot, on firm formal grounds, really be distinguished from statements of fact, signed statements remitting to a legitimate and sanctioned authority. The efforts made by "trust," by trustees, advocates, lawyers pursuing avocations, and others to master, or formalize, regulate, render predictable, or disarm the vagaries introduced in capital's value-system by rumor are not to be trusted, or no more than a rumor might be. "Notwithstanding appearances . . ." runs the *Daily News* article I cite above, "we trust the rumor will yet be shown to have had, if at all, at least but a temporary foundation. And yet trusting is the very poorest ground for hope in mercantile affairs." And it is this ungrounding of trust, of the device and logic intended to regulate the contingencies of rumor, that Borges's translation hears and repeats for his readers, on the corner of Broadway and Canal. His phrase, "Apuesto a que . . . ," shorn (as Spanish does routinely) of the subject pronoun but also of the predicate, of the content of the bet (an elision no more common in Spanish than in English), profits from and defines, tremblingly, the indefinite syntax of rumor. This sort of rumor, the rumor that Borges's translation (and not yet Melville's narrator) hears on the street corner, is more than "perplexing" to the emergent logic of equity and cognitive capitalism. In Spanish, our narrator's imagination is solicited by a subjectless, objectless occurring—an overhearing, an event that seems to crop up headlessly. We add, in our imagination and according to the logic of the "intent" and "absent" mind, both the subject (the subject of the bet, of the tip; the identity of the person in possession of the information that the rumor provides; but also my own, your

own, subjectivity, our own capacity to act so as to add to, to posit, predicate, or imagine anything in the first place) and the object (whatever it is that is the object of our assertion, or holds our imagination in thrall: ourself, our mind, screened to you and to me, a screen before us). What appeared to us the burden of the imagination—the task of producing, in compensation for the silencing of Bartleby himself, the copula allowing the story to translate his singular sacrifice into the general condition of humanity—shifts now. On rumor's paradoxical wings, the imaginary translation of general equivalency fatally fails, with a fatality we can no longer convert, or translate, into a general attribute reigning sovereign over the class to which we belong.

This, then, is the rumor on which "Bartleby, the Scrivener" closes, and which rings in Borges's ear as he translates the scene that Melville's narrator, still caught in the diegesis of his story, still trusting to the step-by-step path he takes on Broadway and in his narrative, has not yet learned to hear.[17] Melville's narrator has closed his former employee's sightless eyes. Some time has passed; in these few months, Melville's narrator has at last heard what Borges's translation voices a century after the story was published. He tells us this:

> Yet here I hardly know whether I should divulge one little item of rumor which came to my ear a few months after the scrivener's decease. Upon what basis it rested, I could never ascertain, and hence how true it is I cannot now tell. But, inasmuch as this vague report has not been without a certain suggestive interest to me, however sad, it may prove the same with some others, and so I will briefly mention it. The report was this: that Bartleby had been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, from which he had been suddenly removed by a change in the administration. When I think over this rumor, I cannot adequately express the emotions which seize me.[18] Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to a pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames? For by the cartload they are annually burned. Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring:—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank note sent in swiftest charity:—he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death. Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity! (34)

Our English-speaking narrator's closing lines now bring into a systematic relation the themes of rumor and contingency, and the syntactic, economic

problem of *indexicality*. This last has kept us quiet company throughout our reading of "Bartleby, the Scrivener": how do we assess the value of the "singular"? How do we understand what something "singular" means? (Everything seems to hang on the narrator's reticent, if not straight-out contradictory expression, in the story's second line: "... an interesting and somewhat singular set of men." Is not the term "singular" categorical? Can something, some "set of men," be "*somewhat* singular" in the same way that a hand, the narrator's, is "somewhat nervously extended with the copy" of a document presented for Bartleby to proofread?) Against what is the narrator's "somewhat singularity" to be measured? How do we compare it, and to what? What sort of "set" *is* "somewhat singular"? Is a "somewhat singular" set the set of individuals who are themselves "somewhat singular," that is, only "somewhat" individuals? Melville's return to the question of indexicality at the story's conclusion is carried, as has often been remarked, by the exquisite ambivalence in the deictic expression "these letters," by means of which Melville's narrator indicates not only the letters sorted by the clerks in the dead letter office, but the letters that comprise his story, "these letters" of "Bartleby, the Scrivener," or at any rate the letters offered us in the rumor, by the rumor, as the rumor that closes the story. This is well-enough known; it's hard to miss, singularly hard to miss. By means of the metonym linking the English "letters," epistles, to the graphemes of his story, our (English-language) narrator turns the "temporary foundation" of rumor into a base as solid as the single word "letter," which stands at the point of intersection, at the urban corner, of both registers (Canal, Broadway . . .): the internal, diegetic register of the dead letter office and the extradiegetical, self-referential register in which the *letters* in "Bartleby, the Scrivener" are the object of the story's indication. At least *this* rumor we can trust, since "these letters" speed at once to us (they are what we are reading) and to the work itself (they are elements in the work). On this minimal, but definitive, point of suture economies can be built, translations accomplished, communities imagined—communities built on *trust* in *rumor*'s "temporary foundations": suturing, universal terms like "humanity," or indeed like "singularity." Communities (including the sorts of communities we call "markets") that emerge and persist on the condition that the mode of their actualization as well as their constituting index-values are contingent, precarious. Communities possessed of the definitive properties of their members, and thus, in a strange way, parts or elements or members of themselves: like "somewhat singular sets" composed of "somewhat singular" elements.

But we are trusting blindly. For consider: just how are we to determine on what register to read the last lines of "Bartleby, the Scrivener"? According

to which standard—one in which the deictic "These" does indeed fold the narrator's words back upon themselves, inviting us to see his "rumor," or the whole story, as "speeding to death"? Or is our (English) narrator's last phrase working contrastively, and distinguishing between "these letters" you are reading and "these other letters," the ones in the dead letter office, the ones we can keep in the tomb of rumor itself, closed away? Is our narrator saying that *those* letters, the ones the dead letter office collects, sorts, and consigns to flame, *those letters* speed toward death, while *these* letters, the ones that you are reading, tell, with the lively and enlivening morality of the tragic tale, the sad but valuable allegory of that tragic destination? Sometimes, headless, rumorously, the index-function switches, and these letters you are reading acquire the surplus-value of the literary work; perhaps out of them you will derive a message—hope, despair, wealth, value. It may be that these letters that speed to death are indeed the ones you are reading. Sometimes they sound like "dead men," but sometimes not. In short—the figure of rumor, long associated with the nameless and unattributable mobility of the field of language, the dissecting of the letter from its intent, "somewhat singularly" wandering outside from the circuit faithfully linking the sender of the letter to its recipient—rumor re-enters Melville's story here not only to firm up the foundation of "trust" but also in its more perplexing, strong, Borgesian sense.

Yes, a poetics of regulated rumor—ambivalent, undecidable, overdetermined—at first *seems* to supply these closing lines with a "temporary foundation" and index permitting us to translate between the proper, singular name and the class name, and to make possible the representation of the general equivalent as the "human" (and vice versa). Yes, this translation is the moral, economic, even political charge of the narrator's ideology, the conversion of the mad contingencies of rumor into the universal condition on which equity capitalism and its many communities will prove to operate. And yes, on the back of our (English language) narrator's "letters" we may, in our imaginary tongue, give voice to the hidden copula linking Bartleby to humanity, the most singular of the "somewhat singular set of men" to the "somewhat singular set" of humans.

This is not, or not only, what Melville's story stages for its readers.

I titled this chapter "Necrophilology," and by this I intend to evoke the singular set of necrophilological concepts and techniques that make up the poetics of equity and cognitive capitalism: prosopography, prosopopoeia, apostrophe, the rhetorical arsenal of commodity abstraction and general equivalence. I intend to evoke the love of dead letters, and also the study of the love of the dead, the death of the study of language, and the love of

the study of the dead. But I also mean something more precise, to which I turn in conclusion. "Bartleby, the Scrivener" is a work of necrophilology inasmuch as it *resists* substantializing, or elevating to the ontological level, or translating into even a "temporary foundation," the indeterminacy of the relative value or of the relative sense of its letters. It holds the mind to its contradictory determination: too "intent," always also "absent." To catch Melville at work, let's return in closing to Borges's translation. Here too his Spanish seems a little off in trivial ways, but it's where it departs most substantially from Melville's text that "Bartleby, el escribiente" shows us, I think, what's at work when Melville's narrator moves to embrace a substantialized, moralized political economy of contingency. Here is Borges's translation of the story's last lines:

> El rumor es éste: que Bartleby había sido un empleado subalterno en la Oficina de Cartas Muertas de Wáshington, del que fue bruscamente despedido por un cambio en la administración. Cuando pienso en este rumor, apenas puedo expresar la emoción que me embargó. ¡Cartas muertas!, ¿no se parece a hombres muertos? Conciban un hombre por naturaleza y por desdicha propenso a una pálida desesperanza. ¿Qué ejercicio puede aumentar esa desesperanza como el de manejar continuamente esas cartas muertas y clasificarlas para las llamas? Pues a carradas las queman todos los años. A veces, el pálido funcionario saca de los dobleces del papel un anillo—el dedo al que iba destinado, tal vez ya se corrompe en la tumba-; un billete de Banco remitido en urgente caridad a quien ya no come, ni puede ya sentir hambre; perdón para quienes murieron desesperados; esperanza para los que murieron sin esperanza, buenas noticias para quienes murieron sofocados por insoportables calamidades. Con mensajes de vida, estas cartas se apresuran hacia la muerte. ¡Oh Bartleby! ¡Oh humanidad!

Notice just two things. My argument to this point has stressed that Melville's (English language) narrator universalizes the figure of rumor and makes it the device for moving between the story's levels—hence the operating verb on which the affect is carried, "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which seize me. Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men?" Here "this rumor" indicates the story our narrator has just relayed to his reader, and the expression "sounding like dead men" is the device on which the narrator's allegorical impulse will operate. Rumor and sound work hand in hand—*this* rumor, the rumor concerning the dead letter office, is what sounds like "dead men." Spanish can easily capture this turn of phrase: all we would have to say is something like "¡Cartas muertas!, ¿no suena a hombres muertos?" But Borges does not choose to do so—he translates the English narrator's "sounds like" as *parece*, the verb meaning

"to resemble," "to appear like something else." He broadens the frame—resemblance in general, in the abstract, is at work to close "Bartleby, el escribiente," and not just "sound." But when Borges disengages the movement between the singular name and the class term from the phonic register on which Melville's narrator has been building it we lose the (English) story's intervening device, its specific organ but also the device linking the story's formal architecture to the moment and setting it seeks to evoke (Wall Street's "uproar," the Tombs' and the protagonist's "silence").

This process of abstraction is at work where the Spanish of Borges's translation makes its specificity felt most starkly. Here are two examples, at different levels. The word "letters," in English and in the French *lettres*, and in other languages as well, has the useful, immensely rich peculiarity that it can refer to the missive that you and I might exchange by mail, and the grapheme we write out in order to compose the words of such a letter. All the indexical ambiguity of Melville's conclusion turns on this metonymous peculiarity: Bartleby's dead letters are, or could be, the letters in which the story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" is written. But this is not an ambivalence that Spanish permits. Borges's prose cannot make this pun: the difference between *carta* and *letra* is unbridgeable; there is no way for Spanish to move, literally, from the letter to the letter, from *letra* to *carta*. A letter, in Spanish, may be composed of letters, *una carta se puede escribir en letras* or *se puede componer de letras*, but the metonym substituting the letter for the letter is foreclosed. And notice also something strange—something that Spanish does permit, indeed something that Borges's translation should have caught, surely an error rather than the manifestation of an irreducible linguistic particularity. Melville's narrator tells us that "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which seize me." This is wonderful—it places the relation to rumor, and also to this literary work, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," in its proper temporal frame: a rumor or a story comes to one's attention, and at any time, whenever one thinks it over, it produces an affect, an emotion. Thought and affect coincide; the self can hardly express the seizure it experiences when emotion follows on thought in this way, necessarily, correlatively. This is the governing fantasy of the aesthetic of equity capital, one might say—the generality of value is like the chronological universality of the affect elicited by the work, by the letter: whenever you think on a rumor, on *this* rumor, an emotion seizes you, hard to express but universal, a definitively *human* emotion: "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which seize me."

Borges has at his disposal precisely the same tense form for rendering this governing fantasy—the present tense, intended to convey that the emotion

seizes you now and here, at any time indicated by the moment in which you think: I think, therefore I feel. But Borges chooses instead to translate Melville's "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which seize me" as "Cuando pienso en este rumor, apenas puedo expresar la emoción que me *embargó*." This would be in English "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which *seized me*," "seized me" *then*, "seized me" at the moment when I first heard the rumor, presumably, but not necessarily just now, not at this moment when I think about the rumor and seek, with difficulty, in English or in Spanish, to express what I feel. Borges's Spanish seizes on something that Melville's narrator lets slip. Whether Borges's narrator intends it or not, whether it is a mark of the structural specificity of Spanish (the lack of a metonym in Spanish linking *carta* and *letra*) or the expression of the translator's decision (the shift in tenses affecting the relation between reason and emotion), Borges's translation achieves precisely what Melville's narrator seeks to displace: the desubstantialization of contingency as the general equivalent or index. Borges's translation is profoundly anti-indexical and anti-copulative—but the alternative it provides to Melville's necrophilology is not a sort of abstraction that lends itself to the setting-into-circulation, for exchange and general valuation, of whatever-commodities, identities, or letters. The abstraction that Borges's translation performs on and discloses in "Bartleby, the Scrivener" unlinks Melville's "letters" from themselves and disjoins the time of thought from the time of affect. His translation, in short, seizes and guards—*embarga*: the play on the term's economico-juridical sense, which we hear in English's "embargo," is much stronger in Spanish than in English—in its apparent failures, the ideological bases on which Melville's narrator seeks to make a story of Wall Street into the story of "humanity," the insistence of whatever-commodity into the general form of value, of whatever-scrivener into the chronicler of emergent modern subjectivity and subjection.

Part II: Mediation

4. The Primal Scenes of Political Theology

> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice.
>
> —William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.196–97

> This *analogy* is the very site of the theologico-political, the hyphen [*trait d'union*] or translation between the theological and the political; it is also what underwrites political sovereignty, the Christian incarnation of the body of God (or Christ) in the king's body, the king's two bodies.
>
> —Jacques Derrida, "What Is a 'Relevant' Translation?"[1]

I asked some pages ago: how, under the accelerating regime of global capital, will we translate the dynamic concepts necessary for gathering together and thinking, then regulating, modifying, displacing, or destroying the catastrophe of capital? The routes I've been taking lead through some of Marx's works, always hand in hand with his readers and his readings—that is, with his translators and his own translations. I've been using, often without marking them, terms whose content and sense Marx treats, but which also serve as logical operators in his works and in his readings: sovereignty, humanity, value, concrete and abstract objects. These terms have also served as operators in my argument; they have worked in my own translations of Marx's arguments, readings, and translations. It is now time to take account explicitly, both in practice and conceptually, of the constitutive interferences that this double use produces.

The term that critical philosophy uses to name the object- and subject-producing dynamics of constitutive interference is "mediation." That term's *own* histories and uses are now complicated and disaggregated by the false friendship between "mediation" and the study of *technical* platforms for the conveyance of information, culture, and value: the "media," and hence "mediation" understood as the ontological horizon of entities destined *to* such platforms. Mediation, then, in the way we understand, say, "coronation": the installation of the object-destined-to-circulate within the circuit to which it was destined, as by blood or by aristocracy; within the circuit in which its movement obeys the rules of value and sense on which the circuit stands.

"Mediation" in the first, critical sense discloses, through the productive, constitutive interference of mediation's current, second sense, its old kinship with political theology, with destiny, destinations, sovereignty, origins, teleologies, blood.

Like "mediation" itself, none of the terms I've offered so far in *On the Nature of Marx's Things*—not "object," not "sovereignty," not "value," and certainly not "humanity"—is innocent of its history: each suffers and wears, each *is* a discontinuous history of uses that precede Marx's and my own and that stretch between the time of *Capital* and ours. Take the concept of "sovereignty." It's a term whose German equivalents caused Marx notorious discomfort, each for quite different reasons. (These flow in the main, as Marc de Launay and others have noted, from Marx's unwillingness to limit *Herrschaft,* sovereignty, dominion, to entities or conceptual objects possessed of juridical, social, or theological identities, and thus ultimately remitting to and grounded in a theological register.[2]) I have been using it at different levels of my argument with a similar discomfort, perhaps—to designate how conceptions of value, extensively understood, organize circuits of commodity circulation; how whatever-commodity will take on the role of organizing such a system, becoming a universal translation machine or general mediator; how the identities and subjectivities fashioned for *homo faber* by his fabrication serve to organize and dominate the world of materials in which fabrication occurs. I have used "sovereignty," too, to describe how the circuit linking disciplinarity's discursive leg, its anthropological leg, and its set of agreed self-representations organizes the field of modern knowledge and serves to define the subjects and objects in that field; how "levels" of abstraction—logical, epistemological, and economic—serve as devices of subjection and of subject-production. Two historical horizons, two indices, determine this sheaf of vectors into Marx's disaggregated treatment of sovereignties: whatever-sense "sovereignty" has today, as I write these words, at a moment when the paths of secularism, technological development, economic globalization, and state organization have manifestly diverged, perhaps disastrously; and whatever-sense "sovereignty" had when Marx sought to link the theologico-political form of sovereignty began to shed in early modernity to the concept of economic value. The mediate, conflicting, unresolvable conflict between these two horizons of sovereignty—that is, their *mediate* relation—is my subject here.

Remember what Derrida calls, in the words I use as an epigraph to this chapter, the "hyphen [*trait d'union*] or translation between the theological and the political . . . [the analogy that] underwrites political sovereignty." How does the "translation" between the theological and the political work (labor,

produce) in Marx's text? How are sovereignties produced there, what machines are at work to make them? We won't be able to approach the question without understanding what materials—cultural, conceptual; raw materials, ready-to-hand tropes to refunctionalize—Marx had at hand.

There would be, I think, two ways of asking after the relation between something, say a concept, called "theologico-political sovereignty," and a historical period in which it might have emerged, or been dominant, or exercised a vestigial sovereignty over subjects and institutions, or when it might have been available for use, as material to be worked on, for the production of a different concept, object, or value. Let's take our cue from Marx's complicated encounter with Spinoza (or with the name "Spinoza"), that is, with a corpus and a name that stands in, for Marx, and quite differently for readers *today*, for the period when the grounds on which we draw the "hyphen" linking and separating "theology" and "politics" are translated, we might say, from the side of the "theological" to the side of the "political." (Here is Spinoza, in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*: "The Sovereign right over all men belongs to him who has sovereign power [*potentia*], wherewith he can compel men by force, or restrain them by threats of the universally feared punishment of death; such sovereign right he will retain only so long as he can maintain his power of enforcing his will; otherwise he will totter on his throne, and no one who is stronger than he will be bound unwillingly to obey him."[3])

Those two ways of asking, then. On one hand, we might ask, regarding that complex cultural thing, "theologico-political sovereignty," how Marx's and our own very different understandings of that period—call it the period of early modernity—condition how we imagine the encounter (the *trait d'union*, hyphen, mediate relation) between politics and theology. What is the agency, the instance, of the "early modern" in our formulation of the theologico-political? This way of posing the question leads us to read Marx, Karl Löwith or Carl Schmitt through Spinoza, through *Hamlet* or *The Merchant of Venice,* for example, or more precisely through a reading of *Hamlet*'s role, or *The Merchant of Venice's* role, in setting the conditions under which we can make statements about "political theology." (*Hamlet or Hecuba,* yes, but on the condition of understanding the work that *Hamlet* does today in popular as well as high culture, inside as well as outside the walls of the university.) The outcome: a satisfactory critical shuttling between historical positions and critical idioms; a "history of the present"; statements (about terms like "politics" or "theology") that attend to the historicity of their own moment and conditions of enunciation. The risks: the bad conscience of endless mediation, and the radically shifted truth-value of the statements

"we" can make about object terms. For "early" ("early modernity") one should be able to substitute other fatuous chronological markers ("middle," "late"); the community charged with "understanding," "imagining," or "formulating" changes accordingly; what counts as "politics" and "theology" too. The companion acknowledgment that recognizing mediation's bad conscience changes nothing could easily be taken, rather smugly, as the defining characteristic of a particular postmodernity. (This would be an adequate way to understand Jean Baudrillard's work, and a rather weaker, but defensible, way of understanding Bernard Stiegler's.) When we ask about the imaginary construction of the historicity of the encounter (between two concepts, "politics" and "theology"), and ask this question in the awareness of its hypermediation and place under the same historicist lens the criteria for determining the truth or falsehood of the answers to this question—then we are being modern, never more so.

On the other hand, say we ask how Marx works with, through, against, the "hyphen" linking and separating "theology" and "politics." Say we reflect on his *use* of the period when (we believe, and we believe he believes) this relation's grounds are translated from the side of the "theological" to the side of the "political." We ask ourselves something like this: "Can we identify, in works we group chronologically or under the signature of a name, Spinoza or Shakespeare, the shape of the *encounter* between what we now call 'politics' and 'theology?'" We recognize on this side of the question that we are reasoning from effects to causes, borrowing the subject that we seek out (something called "theologico-political sovereignty") from a lexicon that it helps set in place and define. "Politics," "theology," and their relation are of course different subjects of inquiry today than they were yesterday, for instance in the early modern period; what we discover today about early modernity serves primarily to confirm the genealogies of our own thought. Asked this way the question becomes, like many archaeological questions, in part an exercise in historical legitimation. A basic, *substantial* continuity (this is Hans Blumenberg's argument) underlies the specious historiographical break between an "early" modernity in which "politics" trailed clouds of still-unforgotten theological glory, and a "modern," secularized modernity: the more the cultural historian marks the difference from the "early" political theology, the more its mantle drifts to his or her shoulders.[4] The polemic now has another edge. "Theologico-political sovereignty" is not a concept alone but the record of an encounter (it is not, for instance, *only* a "borderline concept . . . pertaining to the outermost sphere," as Schmitt describes the concept of sovereignty); the continuing importance of secularization (also not a concept alone) is to be explained by its conversion into disciplinary

authority—the migration of the techniques of valuation of culture from the domain of economic elites to the domain of intellectual elites.[5] The discipline, or the technique, of cultural criticism is the most "modern" of political theologies.

If we parse as I have just done the claim that "theologico-political sovereignty" finds a place, especially a primary or a primal place, in the historical construction of early modernity and in Marx's *use* of that construction, we enter a circle, the classic figure for mediation. The concept (borderline, weak, bearing the marks of its making) of "theologico-political sovereignty" is to be thought today in light of the culturally prevailing understanding of the "early modern period"; of Marx's period; and of *today's* culturally prevailing understanding of the understanding of early modernity that prevails in Marx's period. But also: the concept of the "early modern period" (again, a borderline concept, weak, manifestly fashioned rather than given) is to be thought today by means of a culturally prevailing understanding of "theologico-political sovereignty." These are necessarily weak assertions. What *is* a "culturally prevailing understanding" of a concept? (It is not much better to say that "early modernity" or "theologico-political sovereignty" are to be "thought" in or through "the lexicon associated with" this or that concept, "theologico-political sovereignty" or "early modernity.") Is "culture" synonymous here with "discipline"?

In what follows I'll be trying to answer the following question, while staying as thoroughly as I can within the limits of the circle I have just described. The question: Is there indeed a primal encounter between "politics" and "theology," an early modern "hyphen [*trait d'union*] or translation between the theological and the political" (Derrida) from which the modern understanding of cultural mediation flows, and which would have been available for Marx's use in 1850 or so? I'm going to approach this question in the context of the crisis of classical, indivisible sovereignty that writers on political theology locate in the early modern period. Where theological concepts *were, there* will, *there* should the modern state *be.*

Freud's Schiller

> Don Carlo *atterrito.* Cielo! La morte! per chi mai?
> Rodrigo *ferito mortalmente.* Per me!
>
> Giuseppe Verdi, *Don Carlos*

> Revolutions, I believe, are acceptable only when they are over; and therefore they ought to be over very quickly. What the human beast needs above all

> is restraint. In short, one grows reactionary, just as incidentally did the rebel Schiller in face of the French Revolution.
>
> Sigmund Freud to Lou-Andreas Salomé, February 17, 1918[6]

Let's start over. It is not controversial, I think, to suggest that we owe to Freud, whose famous, moving line *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* I am mimicking above, the prevailing account of how, and why, modern subjects are not immediately understandable to themselves. (No particular judgment concerning the accuracy or inaccuracy, truth or falsehood, of Freud's accounts is entailed by this suggestion. It signals the cultural importance of a particular lexicon and of a series of more or less conventional transformations of that lexicon; it bears on the place that psychoanalytic discourse occupies at the heart of the practices of mediation, and of the languages in which mediation is imagined, in European and Anglo-American popular and academic culture.) That the handoff from theology to politics—a handoff that is of course historically uneven, halting, distributed differently in different domains in which sovereignty is exercised and administered—might have for contemporary political philosophy the characteristics of a *primal scene* means that the encounter between the theological and the political (supposing for now that we can speak of these as if each were distinct from the other) has at the same time the status of a retrospective fantasy; of a compensatory formation or a displacement; of a trauma; and of a fact. It also means that the encounter between theology and politics is imagined to entail an immediate contact between two distinct substances, forms, discursive strategies, *and also* that it is imagined as an utterly mediated, utterly historical relation. "Theology" hands off its sovereign form to "politics" hand to hand, body to body, two distinct, substantial bodies notionally becoming one consubstantial one: the king's body. (In Spanish we say *se relevan,* and a relay race is a *carrera de relevos*.) But "theology" hands off to "politics" a sovereign form built up of uses and mentions, representations now and then of acts that cultures, and cultures' subjects and users, give different weight and sense to, at different moments, to different effect; as they do to this process that Derrida calls the *trait d'union* (*trait* is not just a line like a hyphen, but a substantivized act: a joining, pulling, tracing, blotting-out, canceling, preserving; rather like what Derrida's essay refers to as *une relève* or as the verb *relever,* his translations not only for "translation," but also and much more famously for the Hegelian terms *Aufhebung* and *aufheben*) and which I've been abstractly calling a "handing off." For the lines of history, of use, sense, and work, are marked upon the hands that hand off the sovereign form.

The first step involves a baldly positive assertion. *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*, the defining, mysterious line from Freud that I have been belaboring—

written, Lacan assures us, at the "height of [Freud's] thought"—is not only the definition or the description of a new concept or of a new temporal horizon for the psychic apparatus, it is also and primarily a citation from Friedrich Schiller's play *Don Karlos, Infant von Spanien*, of 1786–87.[7] Sampled from the field of culture, Freud's famous, "moving" line is the very figure of cultural mediation, and it bears marked upon it the *traits* of Schiller's work, until now more or less unremarked. Written toward the end of Freud's career, in 1933–34, in the *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, the sentence crops up at the end of the thirty-first of Freud's lectures, this one devoted to the subject of "Die Zerlegung der psychischen Persönlichkeit" ("The Dissection [or disassembling, or decomposing, or analyzing] of the Psychical Personality")—as ironic a title as Freud had ever provided. Freud has in mind the struggle to reclaim territory for the ego: this, he says, is the task and the aim of psychoanalysis understood as "therapy," and not the "reconciliation" of *Ich* with *Es,* or the production of some sort of peaceful synthesis between the analytically "dissected" parts of the "personality." Bruno Bettelheim remarked on Freud's unexpected use of the term *Kulturarbeit* in this essay to characterize this struggle; Goethe's *Faust* seems to Bettelheim the most likely source.[8] Freud's metaphors, Bettelheim understands, are at the same time military and hydrological. (This is in part what makes the essay's title ironic: there is no easy way to imagine "dissecting" a fluid, a sea for instance: dykes and dams re-channel fluids, but to section off something, to cut it, to dissect it and have it stay dissected—this requires that the substance in hand be a great deal more concrete than the psychic apparatus proves to be.) *Kulturarbeit* is not only, and maybe not be principally, an intellectual project (the writing of a work like *Faust,* the consolidation of the "civilization" of the Renaissance for the use and enjoyment of a modern European elite), but something on the order of the reclamation of land for cultivation, like draining a marsh, or taming a raging sea. The work that psychoanalysis does to permit "I" to encroach upon "id" is like work a laborer does upon the land—handwork, tilling, turning over soil, or building levies, dykes, and dams.

This is Freud's paragraph:

> In thinking of this division of the personality into an ego, a super-ego and an id, you will not, of course, have pictured sharp frontiers like the artificial ones drawn in political geography. We cannot do justice to the characteristics of the mind by linear outlines like those in a drawing or in primitive painting, but rather by areas of colour melting into one another as they are presented by modern artists. After making the separation we must allow what we have separated to merge together once more. . . . Particularly in the case of what is

> phylogenetically the last and most delicate of these divisions—the differentiation between the ego and the super-ego—something of the sort seems to be true. There is no question but that the same thing results from psychical illness. . . . [Psycho-analysis's] intention is, indeed, to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of perception and enlarge its organization, so that it can appropriate fresh portions of the id. Where id was, there ego shall be. [*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*.] It is a work of culture—something like the draining of the Zuider Zee. [*Es ist Kulturarbeit, etwa wie Trockenlegung der Zuydersee*.][9]

It is also, however, "something like" the work of cultural appropriation, or the work of cultural mediation. First, here is Schiller's line. The time—circa 1560. The speakers are King Philip II and the Grand Inquisitor:

> King. But [the Marquis of Posa] / Had been beyond my kingdom's boundaries.
> Grand Inquisitor. Wherever he might be, there I was also. [*Wo Er sein mochte, war Ich auch*.]
> King (*walking impatiently back and forth*). It was known in whose hands I was—
> Why then was there / Delay in warning me?

Schiller's great play—a signal achievement of *Kulturarbeit*, surely central to the European *universitas litterarum*—sets before its audience the tragic sacrifices that attend the encounter between the political and the theological domains: the sacrifice of a son, a friend, a wife, a mistress, of the sovereign's undivided authority.

Schiller bases himself in the well-known story of the death of Philip's son Carlos of Austria, reputed (in Spain) to have gone mad, and to have died in confinement; but bruited (in the European elites' imaginary, intent on linking the decline of Spain's power to the orthodoxy of its religious institutions) to have been assassinated on his father's orders for sedition, heresy, and finally for having set his sights upon his father's new, third wife, Elisabeth de Valois.[10] The exchange that Freud remembers comes after the play's political plot has resolved itself; the theological struggle will be decided in these lines, and the domestic *denouement* follows, in the play's closing scene. King Philip II, Spain's ruler from 1555 to 1598, summons the Inquisitor. They are discussing the assassination of the Marquis de Posa, Prince Carlos's great friend and interlocutor, on the king's orders. Posa is the play's representative of enlightened rationalism, and he has been working to convince the king's son to join the party of rebellion in the Netherlands, revolt against his father, and install something like an enlightened republic in the Hapsburg empire.[11] Posa has been captured and—after a remarkable exchange with King

(Scena 1884)
La Reine Elisabeth (Mme Bruschi-Chiatti) Philippe II. (M. Silvestri) Don Carlos (M. Tamagno)
MILANO: TEATRO ALLA SCALA. — DON CARLO, opera in quattro atti, di G. VERDI. (Atto IV, Scena VII.)

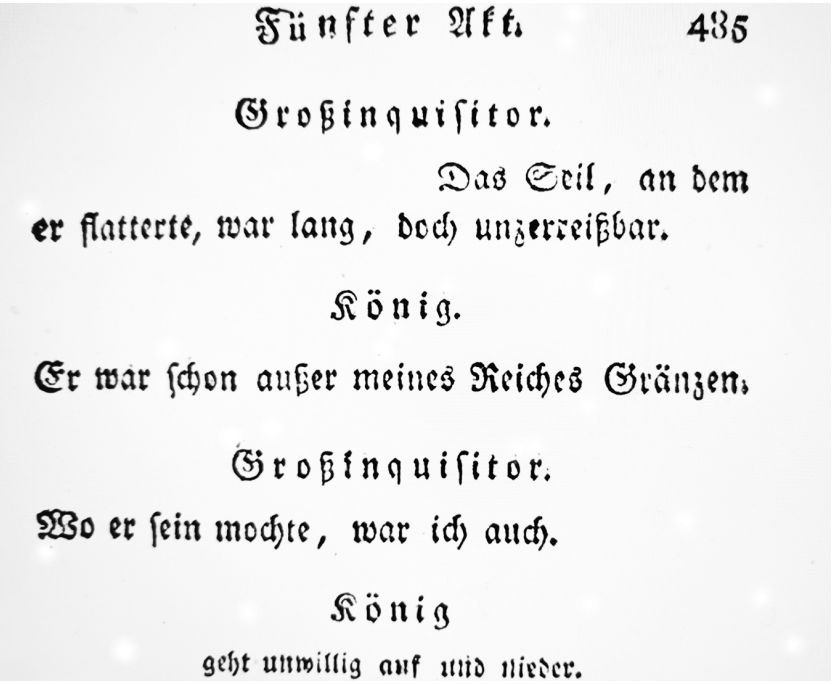
Figure 9. Giuseppe Verdi, *Don Carlo, opera in quattro atti*, engraving of the first La Scala performance (1884) by Carlo Cornaglia. Public domain. Gallica: [estampe] / Barberis [sig.]; Carlo Cornaglia [sig.]. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84373641.r=carlo+cornaglia.langFR. Accessed Oct. 11, 2017.

Philip—done away with on the king's orders. In the play's penultimate scene the blind Inquisitor reveals that the Inquisition had long nurtured a plan to capture and execute Posa "as a terrible example,/And turn high-vaunting reason into shame." The Inquisitor is highly displeased to have been deprived of his victim; Philip, distraught to find that Posa and Carlos were plotting

rebellion, the overthrowing of the confessional and inquisitorial Hapsburg monarchy, and the installation of an alternative form of government, concludes the scene placing his "right to judge" in the Inquisitor's hands and agreeing to hand over Prince Carlos to the Inquisition. The function of *terror* has been reestablished; after the brief opening that Posa's words and deeds provide, rebellion will once again be bound ("Und Schrecken bändigt die Empörung nur. / Erbarmung hieße Wahnsinn," the king has warned Carlos.) More extensively, the scene that Freud is remembering opens like this:

GRAND INQUISITOR. Why did you commit this murder?
KING. Betrayal without parallel——
GRAND INQUISITOR. I know it.
KING. What do you know? Through whom? Since when?
GRAND INQUISITOR. For years, / What *you* have known since sunset.
KING (*surprised*). What? You had / Already known about this man?
GRAND INQUISITOR. His life / Lies opened and concluded in the holy / Record-ledgers of the Santa Casa.
KING. And he walked free?
GRAND INQUISITOR. The cord on which he fluttered / Was long, but still unbreakable.
KING. But he / Had been beyond my kingdom's boundaries.
GRAND INQUISITOR. Wherever he might be, there I was also.
KING (*walking impatiently back and forth*). It was known in whose hands I was— Why then was there / Delay in warning me?
GRAND INQUISITOR. That question I / Turn back upon you—Why did *you* not ask / When you threw yourself into this man's arms?

(KÖNIG. Ein Betrug, der ohne Beispiel ist-
GROSSINQUISITOR. Ich weiß ihn.
KÖNIG. Was wisset Ihr? Durch wen? Seit wann?
GROSSINQUISITOR. Seit Jahren, / Was Sie seit Sonnenuntergang.
KÖNIG *mit Befremdung*. Ihr habt / Von diesem Menschen schon gewußt?
GROSSINQUISITOR. Sein Leben / Liegt angefangen und beschlossen in / Der Santa Casa heiligen Registern.
KÖNIG. Und er ging frei herum?
GROSSINQUISITOR. Das Seil, an dem / Er flatterte, war lang, doch unzerreißbar.
KÖNIG. Er war schon außer meines Reiches Grenzen.
GROSSINQUISITOR. Wo er sein mochte, war ich auch.
KÖNIG *geht unwillig auf und nieder.* / Man wußte, / In wessen Hand ich war— Warum versäumte man, / Mich zu erinnern?
GROSSINQUISITOR. Diese Frage geb ich / Zurücke—Warum fragten Sie nicht an, / Da Sie in dieses Menschen Arm sich warfen?)[12]


Fünfter Akt. 435

Großinquisitor.

Das Seil, an dem
er flatterte, war lang, doch unzerreißbar.

König.

Er war schon außer meines Reiches Gränzen.

Großinquisitor.

Wo er sein mochte, war ich auch.

König

geht unwillig auf und nieder.

Figure 10. "Wo Er sein mochte, war Ich auch." Friedrich Schiller, *Dom Karlos, Infant von Spanien*. Leipzig: Göschen, 1787, 485.

A few words to fill in the outlines of the cultural reservoir that Freud is drawing from, and to establish the plausibility of this source. That Freud had read Schiller's play attentively cannot be doubted. He cites from it a number of times in his letters—for instance, in an early letter to Eduard Silberstein he remembers the play's first lines, "Die schönen Tage in Aranjuez / Sind nun zu Ende"—and he refers to these lines again in a letter to Ferenczi of October 1912; in a letter to Martha Bernays, he recalls the lines "*In meinem Frankreich* wischt man solche Tränen / Mit Freuden ab . . . [/] In meinem Frankreich war's noch anders," from *Don Karlos* 1.6, spoken by the queen and misattributed by Freud in his letter to Mary Stuart, another of Schiller's heroines; in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess from 1895, Freud recalls 2.13: "My theories on defense have made an important advance of which I shall give you an account in a brief paper next time. Even the psychological construction behaves as if it would come together, which would give me immense pleasure. Naturally, I cannot yet say for certain. Reporting on it now would be like sending a six-month fetus of a girl to a ball. We shall not suffer from a dearth of topics to talk about. 'Your battles,' it says in *Don Karlos*, 'and your God'" (Schiller:

Herzog: . . . diese Rosen / Und Ihre Schlachten—Alba: Und dein Gott—so will ich / Den Blitz erwarten, der uns stürzen soll!); in a letter to Jung from October 31, 1910, Freud alludes to *Don Karlos* 1.9 ("arm in arm with you"); and Freud mentions the play as late as 1934 in a letter to Arnold Zweig.[13] In 1920 we find him adding a footnote to *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* of 1901, producing as an example of a literary representation of the slip of the tongue "Shakespeare's *Richard II* (Act II, Scene 2), and . . . Schiller's *Don Karlos* (Act II, Scene 8; a slip made by Princess Eboli)."[14] Freud's circle was at least as interested in *Don Karlos* as was Freud himself—perhaps for obvious reasons. Otto Rank's 1912 *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* devotes a long chapter to the stepmother theme in the play. (Carlos's love for the queen, who steps into his mother's position, results in a crudely Oedipal and crudely doubled struggle—for the queen, for the Princess of Eboli, both of them objects of the king's attention, and of the prince's—in which the father does away with the son and the son's protector and proxy, Posa—at a cost to himself that Philip only glimpses late in the play.) In 1914–15, Hanns Sachs had published two linked articles in *Imago* (at the time jointly edited by Freud, Sachs, and Rank) on Schiller's unfinished play *Der Geisterseher,* placing it in dialogue explicitly with *Don Karlos.* On the one hand, Sachs's observations concerning the rivalries at the heart of the play's plot are not especially original; on the other hand, his analysis of the "Polizeistoff" in Schiller's plays, of the "geheimnisvollen Organisation des Katholizismus" in *Geisterseher* and in *Don Karlos,* where the figure of the Inquisitor draws his attention, is striking.[15] In 1924 Lou Andreas-Salomé wrote to Anna Freud referring to *Don Karlos,* and in 1925 Theodor Reik cited from *Don Karlos* in his *Geständniszwang und Strafbedürfnis.*[16]

None of this is conclusive, of course. And it may be that the drive to establish with certainty the famous phrase's sources is itself to some extent a distraction. (It would not be wrong to detect here the interference of "fantasy," or of a compensatory displacement, with the desire to produce a literary-historical "fact.") A complementary but different approach, no more manifestly verifiable and much less "factual" than the source-searching, cultural-reservoir-filling tack I have just taken, would be to ask whether the reference, if it is one, to Schiller *makes sense* in the context of the lecture. "Makes sense" here means: is motivated by the context, arises in a determinable relation to the "dissection" of the "psychic personality," plausibly reinforces Freud's claims in the lecture. Here matters are much trickier, as what we take to *be* Freud's claims in the lecture have come down to his readers built upon the signal mystery of the phrase, a mystery that enables us to read it as the most lyrical enunciation of the therapeutic horizon of

psychoanalysis, of what Lacan refers to, in his essay on the "Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," as "reintegration and harmony, I might even say of reconciliation [*Versöhnung*]."[17] The context that Schiller's play provides dashes this view of Freud's phrase, and of the great arc of his argument (we no longer move from *Zerlegung* to *Versöhnung*, one might say)—so in an important way the informing mediation of Schiller's text cannot be read within the horizon of the "therapeutic" or humanistic construction of "the goal Freud's discovery proposes to man."

Let's allow the hypothesis that Schiller's scene lies behind Freud's phrase to work, for now. What changes about the "dissection" of the "psychical personality" when *Don Karlos*, Schiller's representation of the encounter between politics and theology in one version of the period of early modernity, enters onto the scene? What changes in our understanding of Freud's career, and in the *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*? What changes in the history of the psychoanalytic movement after Freud? Finally, what changes in our understanding of the mediating and determining functions of the notion of "early modernity"?

On the most obvious level, remark that a complicated, flickering pattern of identifications and disidentifications takes shape as soon as Schiller's play steps into Freud's essay. We have seen, from Freud's letter to Lou-Andreas Salomé of February 17, 1918, cited above, how Freud appears to identify with Schiller, the one's Russian Revolution echoing the other's French. The temptation to play out Schiller's dramatic scene with other characters—with Freud's characters and concepts—is irresistible, but it immediately makes Freud's screened allusion thoroughly unreadable, and the phrase's value as a description much less certain (or different). Prince Carlos, infantile and impetuous in Schiller's play, might momentarily capture something about the pleasure principle; his affection for his young stepmother (in evidence spectacularly in Verdi's version of the story, of course), his father's censure, the son's duplication in the father's affection (Carlos, Posa)—all these follow flickeringly a well-known Oedipal plot. Consider also, on a different level, the momentary identification the screened reference invites between the psychoanalyst and Posa, the character who embodies the sort of rationality that might support the project of a critical "dissection" of the "psychic personality." A certain tragic heroism is solicited for the psychoanalyst, on this reading: destined to exile and death, to supervision, disciplining, sacrifice, all for having followed out egalitarian political principles (Posa) or for having proposed a description of human subjectivity that dethrones old psychic masters and installs the equally leveling sovereignty of the unconscious.

For Schiller, and then mediately, informingly, for Freud, Hapsburg confes-

sionalism, that old and renewed alliance between politics and theology, lines up against the figure of enlightened analysis, the figure of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalyst; the blind Inquisitor and the king stand in against the enlightened Renaissance, against Posa's and Leonardo da Vinci's and (later) Jacob Burckhardt's Renaissance. They are figures of censure, interdiction, orthodoxy, disciplinarity; Spain stands, reactionary, culturally against Italy and politically against the republican Netherlands; an early modernity that guards the *trait d'union* between theology and politics against a nontheological, resolutely modern secularism.

One is used to these symmetries and duplications in Schiller's work. In Freud, however, matters get messy almost immediately. When the principle of enlightened reason travels beyond the confines of the confessional realm, it does so still under surveillance, and it still acts a part set for it by forces willing for it, willing where it wills. *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden,* or, as the Inquisitor has it, *Wo Er sein mochte, war Ich auch*. With Freud's Schiller, we now imagine the Inquisitor, that blind-but-all-seeing mechanism of the "I" that was always-already wherever the drive to escape—Posa in this little allegory—ever wanted to go. The Inquisitor says: "I was there already, wherever you wanted to go, in the place to which you, Posa, wanted to escape, watching and waiting." Or he says: "The 'I' is in fact nothing other than that structure of watching-and-waiting for the arrival of the desire for freedom, as it arrives where it thinks it is free only to find itself captured or expressed, for instance by the work of 'culture,' by the word of Schiller's play." But if this is so, then on the *disciplinary* level—and one should remember that Freud's stories, even his case histories, are most often also disciplinary stories—Posa no longer stands in for psychoanalysis, or not at any rate for all of the functions of psychoanalysis. Instead, it is psychoanalysis itself, recovering ground for the "I" from the swampy seepages or heroic sallies of the "it," that the blind Inquisitor and the king, theology and politics joined together in this imaginary reconstruction of the primal scene where politics and theology meet—it is psychoanalysis itself that the administrative terror of the theologico-political represents; that the terror of the administrative-confessional, early modern, Spanish Inquisitorial state represents. Gone, on this Inquisitorial description, is the pathos of renunciation and reconciliation that Lacan and others find in *Wo Es war* . . . Culture works here to drain Freud's *Kulturarbeit* of therapeutic sense. Under the pressure of Schiller's informing scene, Freud's phrase reveals instead the intrinsically supervisory, political function that informs the hydrology or the mechanics of the psychic system.

One result in either case, whether we unfold the antithetical identification

of psychoanalysis in the direction of Posa (the psychoanalyst as a tragic figure of rational emancipation) or in the direction of the administrative terror of the theologico-political, toward the king and the Inquisitor: the notions of force, violence, and administrative oversight move from being themes or circumstances subject to ontogenetic, "psychoanalytic" investigation, and susceptible to a therapeutic intervention (for instance, by means of techniques that permit the "I" to take over ground from the "it" or the "id"), to being structuring principles of that investigation. (We are never in a position to abandon *Zerlegung*, dissection, segmentation, analysis: deconstruction.)

And yet even this complicated, contradictory, antithetical picture is incomplete, and in one respect it is crucially wrong. In Schiller's play, the struggle between the king and the Inquisitor over the prince's fate is slight—a disagreement among the archaic forces that resist modernization and enlightenment rather than a significant contradiction in the conceptualization of sovereignty. Nor is the outcome really in dispute—not least because the scene repeats the earlier encounter between the king and the prince, when the monarch reminds his son that any course but the application of "terror" would be "madness" [*Wahnsinn*]: because the king has ruined the Inquisitor's plan, a substitute must be found. The weight of the analogy between the two scenes is carried by the king's acknowledgment to the Inquisitor that "Ich bin / In diesen Dingen noch ein Neuling. Habe / Geduld mit mir." (I am in such matters no better than a novice, a beginner. Be patient with me.) And into this empty spot, the spot of the sacrificial, exemplary victim, the prince will be delivered by his father.

Except of course that Schiller's scene does not depict the successful coordination of the political and the theological-administrative regimes, the triumph of the Inquisitor, the handing-off of the substantial form of sovereignty from theology to politics or politics to theology, and the marking of the translation or *trait d'union* between the two domains. The history of the Inquisition has a name for one such successful hand-off. The Spanish and American Inquisitions, unable legally to carry out executions, turned over condemned prisoners to the crown, which confirmed and carried out the tribunal's sentences. These prisoners were referred to as *relajados,* those who have been handed over, or loosened, or released, or eased; from the Latin *relaxo, relaxare,* to "lighten, alleviate, mitigate, soften, assuage; to cheer up, enliven, relax."[18] At least here, however, it is the spectacular failure of the Inquisition and the monarchy to operate in consort, to hand off Posa from one domain to another, that we witness. Posa's death, brought about by the political sovereign, was not anticipated, and highly displeases the theologico-administrative arm of the Inquisition, which had built itself upon making

Posa an example, indeed the very type, of its successful surveillance. This failure flows from and makes patent the dis-coordination of throne and altar; it makes clear that in this case at any rate the two act out of phase, in time to different logics, out of step. In Schiller's play, where the king went in executing Posa, the Inquisitor was not waiting; and through the king, Posa has at last traveled where the Inquisitor was not already: he has reached death. That in a sense this is precisely the place to which the Inquisition would have consigned him—that Posa would at the Inquisitor's bidding have been handed over by the Inquisition for execution, *relajado,* to the crown, which would have done with him what the king has already done, though in this case as an example, as the example of the Inquisition's influence over the crown—this minimal difference (of timing, of the exemplary or representational status of the execution) makes every difference to the way political theology comes on stage.

It is into the spot that Posa has vacated that Philip delivers his son, Posa's fraternal double: for Abraham has acted with haste and has slain his son before the angel's hand can arrest him, before the ram can be produced. The nature of the king's sacrifice is now clear: the son, the sovereign's only son, is delivered up for sacrifice so as to cancel out a previous death, in order to render exemplary what was not, to place a representative death, a death representable within the field of cultural work, in place of another that it cannot quite displace, a prior duplicate, an *analogue* (Derrida: "This *analogy* is the very site of the theologico-political, the hyphen [*trait d'union*] or translation between the theological and the political"), like but unlike inasmuch as it is specifically nonrepresentational. The sovereign's son dies by way of compensation, always *post-festum*: because he cannot stand in for Posa's death—because he is, though the marquis's fraternal double, distinct from him precisely in being destined for a *representative* death—Carlos dies not as a way of suturing the political and the theologico-administrative domains, not as their *trait d'union,* or not as these alone, but as the compensatory mark of their division as well. At the spot of Posa's death, where Carlos will come to die in place of the marquis's death, what waits is not "I," or not at any rate an "I" that waits to capture and form, by means of cultural or pedagogical bonds, lessons and examples, the infant's or the flight of the "id" toward freedom. For Schiller's Freud, what waits has *anything but* the structure of watching-and-waiting for the arrival of the desire for freedom, as it arrives where it thinks it is free only to find itself captured or expressed, for instance by the work of "culture," by the word of Schiller's play.

Before I try to show where Schiller's Freud takes us, let me look in the reservoir of *Kulturarbeit* from which Freud was drawing for a further mediation,

for further confirmation of this drama of failed surrogacy, faulty doublings, mistimed representation, and garbled communication. The greatest, as well as the best known, rendering of Schiller's *Don Karlos* is Verdi's opera *Don Carlos,* which like Schiller's play climactically stages the encounter between the realms of politics and of the theologico-administrative. Verdi's plot is a little different from Schiller's, but the opera's play of doubles carefully captures Schiller's symmetries. In Verdi's version, King Philip, like Carlos, is deeply attached to Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, made a duke by Philip. Posa turns toward himself the evidence of Carlos's political involvement with the rebels in Flanders ("Il fiero agitator delle Fiandre," Posa tells the imprisoned Carlos, "son io!") as a way of saving the condemned prince and ushering in a new age: "Un nuovo secol d'ôr rinascer tu farai;/ Regnare tu dovevi ed io morir per te." But the Inquisitor has approached King Philip and demanded that Philip deliver up his friend: "A te chiedo il signor di Posa." This is the way that the Italian librettists of Verdi's *Don Carlos* render the end of the unforgettable encounter between Philip and the Grand Inquisitor, the king's weak acquiescence to the Inquisitor's demand:

> Filippo: Mio padre, che tra noi la pace alberghi ancor.
> L'Inquisitore: La pace?
> Filippo: Obliar tu dêi quel ch'è passato.
> L'Inquisitore: Forse!
> Filippo: Dunque il trono piegar dovrà sempre all'altare![19]
>
> (Philip: Father, let peace abide between us still.
> Inquisitor: Peace?
> Philip: You should forget what has passed.
> Inquisitor: Perhaps!
> Philip: And so the throne must always give way before the altar!)

The Inquisitor departs; Posa visits Carlos in his cell, where the marquis reveals that he has drawn upon himself the evidence and the charge of treason against the prince. Two men, one dressed in the garb of the Inquisition, the other bearing an arquebus, appear. A shot is fired; Carlos, terrified, cries out: "Cielo! La morte! per chi mai?" Rodrigo answers: "Per me!"

I will return to this exceptionally odd exchange between the prince and the marquis. Achille de Lauzières and Angelo Zanardini, *Don Carlos*'s librettists, have been making this argument: threatened by complex pressures (parental devotion, friendship, love) the old peace between the king and the Inquisitor can only be brought back to its proper spot, "residing" or "abiding" (*albergàre*, an odd word in this context) between the sovereign and

the authority of the theological-administrative realm, when the Inquisitor "forgets what has happened."[20] The Inquisitor will not forget, or may not forget—but in any case the decision lies with him, and the king's request cannot rise to the level of a command, the verb *dovere* ("Obliar tu dêi") lodging, resident, like Freud's verb *sollen,* somewhere between the registers of moral obligation (the Inquisitor *should* forget), of the command (the Inquisitor is *ordered* to forget), and of the suggestion, even the plea (the Inquisitor is *requested* to forget, or *implored* to do so). "Forse" is the Inquisitor's tense, difficult answer. What is it an answer to? The king's assertion or plea—"tu dêi," as in "Perhaps it is true that 'I ought' to do what you say, yes, after all, you are the king"? Or perhaps, *forse*, to its content—as in "Perhaps I will forget . . ."? *Forse*: the word harbors and discloses the fundamental asymmetry of the relation between the two characters, and between the institutions, traditions, and forms of power they each represent for Verdi: *trono* and *altare,* politics and theology. *Forse*: the word may even be said to produce this asymmetry, working not only as a hyphen between "politics" and "theology," not as a *trait d'union* alone, but also and simultaneously as a *trait de division*. The Inquisitor's word bends the sovereign's will, not by appealing to a stronger will, or to a more general or more universal law, or to a more proximate relation to instituting or administrative violence, the twin *ultimae rationes regum*. The altar bends the throne before it because the church holds in reserve the decision to remember or to forget, to act or not to act. From the point of view of this reserve, any action that the state, the throne, or the political domain might take finds itself housed in advance in the *altar*: the reserve of the theological domain is itself theologically obscured, it is in the nature of the terror of theology.

In Schiller, and in Verdi, rational enlightenment shapes a genealogy for itself from the field of culture, and then installs that genealogy as the organizing principle of that field. (When I say "in Schiller and in Verdi" I mean that this double process of "shaping" and "installing" happens *in* their works and more broadly *by means of* their works.) In them the drama of secularization and modernization features an archaic plot: a benighted early modernity—confessional, Inquisitorial—where the substance of theological sovereignty is handed off to a political sphere thus shaped to it; facing and opposing it, a larval principle of freedom, resembling that first, benighted early modernity as one brother might resemble another, as Abel for instance might resemble Cain. At stake: land, culture, primogeniture, thought. A sacrifice is required, or two; on each side, doubled figures: the Inquisitor and the king on one side, Carlos and Posa on the other. The genealogy of secular, rational enlightenment takes shape in and from the sacrificial death

of its early modern defenders. With Carlos's and Posa's deaths, a new age, "un nuovo secol d'ôr," is reborn, "rinasce" is Posa's word: a second, enlightened Renaissance.

The genealogy of confessional political theology takes shape in the same moment, by the same gesture, joined to or translated into secular, rational enlightenment by a *trait d'union*. The prince's death, or in its place the marquis's death, joins together theology and politics, marks the spot where *trono* yields to *altare* in accepting from the altar the relay, the *relajado,* that it will put to death as an example. And here the attentiveness of Verdi's librettists is remarkable. Where Schiller embeds a *trait de division* into *Don Karlos,* in the shape of the relation of nonsubstitutability between Carlos and Posa, in the shape of the temporal and representational difference between the two characters' deaths, Verdi's librettists provide the astonishing spectacle of a death announced on stage, and then as it is *fought over* by two twinned characters. For what can it mean that the prince does not know whether he or Posa has been hit? Whether it is his body or his double's body—the body of the man who has stepped into his place, taken his death from him—that has been touched by the bullet? "Per me!" exclaims Posa: "I have seized it, this death is mine, I have made it mine; it was waiting for you; where you were to go it already awaited, but I stepped forth and made it mine!" The story of the emergence of secular, rational enlightenment is the story of a death and a rebirth, of fratricidal conflict, of a sacrifice—in short, its shape, tropes, and materials are those of the theologico-political domain, whose *cultural* substance is turned to other use, seized and appropriated as Posa seizes and appropriates the death intended for Carlos. And on the other hand, however, the story of the persistence of confessional political theology—as told by Donoso and Schmitt, for whom the figures of Abel and Cain are also central—is the story of the failure of a sacrifice, of the unbreachable difference between the death of the sovereign's son and the man he will not be able to represent, of an unhinged and mistimed handoff or relay, of a mistranslation, of a Reformation. In short, the tropes and cultural materials from which, and in which, the genealogy of confessional political theology takes shape are always and already located where that genealogy is not waiting, where it does not reach.

Lacan's Renaissance

> We all still show too little respect for Nature which (in the obscure words of Leonardo which recall Hamlet's lines) "is full of countless causes [*ragioni*] that never enter experience." Every one of us human beings corresponds to one

> of the countless experiments in which these "*ragioni*" of nature force their way into experience.
>
> Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood"[21]

Allow me now to move toward a conclusion on a slightly different level. I have been worrying questions preliminary to any investigation into how, under what circumstances, to what purposes, and with what limitations "political theology" comes onto the scene of "early modernity." I've moved between Freud and Schiller, and through the determining ways that the Enlightenment and its Freudian recasting and critique sought to shape the Renaissance, so as to suggest that a contradictory, even antithetical construction of early modernity shapes the cultural materials available to us today for imagining the encounter, or handoff, or *relève* between politics and theology. My hypothesis has been that this antithetical construction of early modernity conforms to two genealogies for modernity that shape, limit, and contradict each other. I have referred to this series of encounters, contradictions, shapings, and limitations rather generally as if they constitute a group of primal scenes, the primal scenes of political theology, intending the genitive in its most extensive senses: to indicate that the concept, if it is one, of political theology *suffers from* "primal scenes" proper to it (traumatic encounters, fantasies, prohibited scenarios, etc.); and also to indicate that political theology *produces for us* traumatic encounters, fantasies, prohibited encounters that help constitute our psychic and disciplinary identities. Let me close with an example of the way in which the double fantasy of early modernity's relation to political theology inflects how we understand cultural mediation more broadly.

There is a subclass of writings within the psychoanalytic canon that bear explicitly on the problem of political theology. Each of us will no doubt be able to come up with his or her own list of these, ranked differently and reflecting quite different senses of what a "psychoanalytic canon" might be; I suspect that *Moses and Monotheism* might make most lists, as would *Anti-Oedipus* and some of Herbert Marcuse's works; less obvious, more interesting, might be some of Heinz Kohut, and not a few of Melanie Klein's and D.W. Winnicott's works. Lacan's essay on the "Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," which has been keeping us company surreptitiously thus far, belongs to this baggy group—though much less clamorously than either Freud's or Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's works. "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," first delivered at the Sorbonne's Amphitheatre Descartes as a talk to the university's literature students, strives to hinge the languages and disciplines of philosophy, philology, and psychoanalysis to

each other within "l'*universitas litterarum* de toujours," "the age-old *universitas litterarum* . . . the ideal place [for the institution of psychoanalysis]," as Lacan has Freud say, evidently also thinking of the location and occasion of his own talk. (The essay was delivered as a lecture on May 9, 1957, to the Groupe de Philosophie of the Fédération des Etudiants ès Lettres-Sorbonne.) In that sense "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious" also forms part of the subclass of writings in the psychoanalytic tradition that treat openly the relation between the concepts of psychoanalysis, its institutional, technical, and therapeutic aspects, and its material and practical conditions—much as the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* proposes to do.

In order to hinge these different disciplines to each other, Lacan's essay imagines a language sufficiently formalized, or a language sufficiently universal, that in and through it the different sorts of claims (to completeness, to truth, coherence, etc.) of different disciplines can be translated into each other, and can come under some sovereign rule (the rule of translation, of relation). The essay performs the mediating and translating function it will ascribe to "reason since Freud" by perching itself, Lacan says, midway between the written and the spoken word; it closes upon an image of similar topological complexity, concluding that "Freud par sa découverte a fait rentrer à l'intérieur du cercle de la science cette frontière entre l'objet et l'être qui semblait marquer sa limite" (through his discovery Freud brought the border between object and being that seemed to mark the limit of science within its ambit). The characteristic turn to topology is attenuated (these are, after all, *étudiants ès lettres*), or rather it is carried out at a different level from the one to which many others of Lacan's works of the period turn: here it is the "borders" of Lacan's writing that are brought within the circle of his essay. This invaginating movement runs rigorously through "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious." It is first a formal principle: Lacan's literary examples bring into his work samples from the reservoir of culture, the *universitas litterarum*; these samples work instrumentally, discreetly, and discretely, as a citation from Paul Valéry might do, to illustrate this or that point; but each is a figure for the *universitas litterarum* as well. Or rather, each "sample" stands in for what I've rather inexactly, rather too hydrologically, been calling the reservoir of culture, and stands in *both* as a metaphor, a condensed representation of that *universitas litterarum* of which Lacan's essay, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," is a part and a product; *and* as a metonym, a contingent substitute expressing the endless *desire* to bring within the circle of the essay that which, being brought within it, brings along more than the essay's "borders" know how to contain.

This complicated principle of *topo*logical and *tropo*logical translation bears

an additional weight in the essay, where it enters into rich conversation with an *onto*logical vocabulary that Lacan draws in some measure from his reading and translation of Heidegger's essay on "Logos," just published in *La Psychanalyse*.[22] It's a well-enough-known encounter, but it is worth underscoring that when Lacan mentions that "when I speak of Heidegger, or rather when I translate him, I strive to preserve the sovereign signifierness of the speech he proffers" (je m'efforce à laisser à la parole qu'il profère sa signifiante souveraine), he makes himself into a cultural example—a "sample" from the "cultural reservoir" of readers of Freud and Heidegger, and so on—and brings himself explicitly, and as problematically as in the case of the literary examples I briefly mentioned, within the "ambit" of his essay.[23]

I mentioned that Lacan's essay opens situationally and performatively, commenting on the circumstances of its enunciation, broadly and indexically gesturing to the auditorium, the various disciplines knotted together in the institution, the space, the audience. But this is not quite right, for the published version of "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious" has a different border and opens earlier, upon a scene it wishes to bring within its border, a scene both prophetic and historical, both anticipatory and symptomatic. And this description refers openly, indeed spectacularly, *to the Renaissance*. I'm referring to the epigraph to the essay, borrowed by Lacan from Louise Servicen's translation of Leonardo's *codex atlanticus*, which Servicen has taken from the Italian original edited by Jean Paul Richter, but also and primarily from Richter's German translation. Here are the famous lines. They are drawn from the first section of the so-called "Division of the Prophecies" within Leonardo's *codex,* the section "of things relating to animals." They bear on the constitution of the city:

> **Of Children Bound in Bundles.**
> O cities of the Sea! In you I see your citizens—both females and males—tightly bound, arms and legs, with strong withes by folks who will not understand your language. And you will only be able to assuage your sorrows and lost liberty by means of tearful complaints and sighing and lamentation among yourselves; for those who will bind you will not understand you, nor will you understand them.[24]

This is Servicen's translation:

> **Des enfants au maillot**
> O cités de la mer, je vois chez vous vos citoyens, hommes et femmes, les bras et les jambes étroitement ligotés dans de solides liens par des gens qui n'entendront point votre langage, et vous ne pourrez exhaler qu'entre vous, par des

> plaintes larmoyantes, des lamentations et des soupirs, vos douleurs et vos regrets de la liberté perdue. Car ceux-là qui vous ligotent ne comprendront pas votre langue, non plus que vous ne les comprendrez.[25]

And the Italian:

> **De fanciulli che stanno legati nelle fasce**
> O città marine, io veggo in voi i vostri cittadini, così femmine come maschi, essere istrettamente dei forti legami colle braccia e gambe esser legati da gente che non intenderanno i vostri linguaggi, e sol vi potrete isfogare li vostri dolori e perduta libertà mediante i lagrimosi pianti e li sospiri e lamentazione infra voi medesimi, chè chi vi lega non v'intenderà, né voi loro intenderete.[26]

Annabel Patterson leaned on this epigraph to mount an attack on Lacan's, and through him on psychoanalytic criticism's, "elitism," which Patterson associates with the discipline's resistance to history and politics, and with the individualism entailed in what Lacan calls "la difficulté de la référence au réel." "If one places Leonardo's fable," writes Patterson, "not only in his whole collection (which is pervasively interested in the political and social meanings of liberty) but also in the documentable history of the fable, from antiquity onward, as a strategy for evading censorship, it stands rather in an oblique and antagonistic relation to Lacan's essay than as its aphoristic essence."[27] What happens if we read the reference to Leonardo as it were through the fantasy or fantasies of early modernity—or, more properly, of the Renaissance—that this "universal genius," already "admired even by his contemporaries as one of the greatest men of the Italian renaissance," as Freud calls him, brings within the ambit, the borders, of Lacan's essay?[28] What happens when we read Lacan's Leonardo through Freud's Schiller (or Schiller's Freud)? What happens to the "political and social meanings of liberty" that "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious" may disclose?

The questions are too broad and too consequential to treat briefly. Let me sketch out some possible approaches. We are not surprised to find that Freud's 1910 monograph on Leonardo opens citing from Burckhardt: it is partly Leonardo's place in the "age-old *universitas litterarum*" that is in question in Freud's essay; Freud's diagnosis of Leonardo, flawed and partial as it may appear, forms part of a number of roughly contemporaneous works that treat the narcissistic attachment of European culture to fantastical constructions of the *universitas litterarum* of precursor and legitimating "civilizations" and "cultures," most prominently the cult and culture of the Renaissance.[29] Bear in mind, then, the role that Leonardo has in Freud's thought on the work of culture. For now, let us agree that the lines that Lacan cites from

Leonardo's rather mysterious *codex* bear first and most obviously on the notion of *binding*—on its relation to citizenship, to speech, to force, violence, the distinction between the human and the animal, and so on. What Leonardo might mean by "binding," however, is partly eclipsed in the French translation that Lacan cites, which stresses the sense of *maillot* as a swaddling cloth for infants. (Académie Française: "Pièce ou bande de tissu utilisée pour envelopper le corps et les membres d'un nourrisson. Un enfant serré dans un *maillot*. Un enfant au maillot, un très jeune enfant."[30] The rich connection of *maillot* to *maille,* mesh, is subterranean.) Servicen's stress on the constraint this *maillot* places upon the *infans*—part comfort, part education—chimes nicely with much of the explicit content of Lacan's essay—an ontogenetic movement of psychic maturation, education, and confinement that each child experiences, in hand with the phylogenetic realignment of the relation to being that Heidegger announces and deplores, conceived perhaps in developmental terms, as if each child, and human history as well, underwent something like Enlightenment. Richter's English—"Of Children Bound in Bundles"—restores some of the image's odd violence (a bundle of children, as well as children individually bundled, or children bound and bundled together with other things), and attends more carefully to the placement of the fragment in Leonardo's notebooks (the surrounding prophetic images are all deliberately disjunctive).

But to allow Leonardo's Italian, "De fanciulli che stanno legati nelle fasce," to seep anachronistically or achronically into Lacan's essay makes matters even more disturbing. (Leonardo's Italian is not immediately present in Lacan's text, any more than Verdi's Italian is in Freud's *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*. Has it perhaps been imported, brought within the essay's ambit or borders, according to a metonymous, hydro-logical conception of the field of culture? Of *Kulturarbeit?*)

Remark the quiet link between Leonardo's *dei forti legami . . . legati* and the Italian *legge,* law; recall the lexical and conceptual importance for Lacan of *legein*, binding-together and letting-lie-in-unconcealment, in the Heraclitus fragment that Heidegger treats, and which Lacan translates and mentions in "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious." Lacan's use of the prophecy of citizens bound by laws (*legge*) into *fasces* willy-nilly brings into the ambit of his essay, brings within its borders, that *réel* that Patterson calls for—though in a less than naked way, the Heideggerian lexicon of *legein* rhyming with Leonardo's figure of discipline and legal binding in a quiet reference to the historical situation from which Europe had just emerged. The "difficult . . . reference to the real" of *fascism* has been with us all along, from the beginning, before indeed we even began to read (*leggere, legein,* and so on).

We do not need to travel quite so far downstream to make the point. Leonardo's cities of the sea are metaphors only—vivid tropes employed perhaps, as Patterson says, to avoid censure, perhaps for different reasons. The "fable" Lacan finds in Servicen's edition nestles among the surrounding prophecies, which concern anthropomorphized trees, dogs, rats, and so on. Leonardo's citizens are in the first instance nothing but fish, bound in nets, male with female, unable to converse with the humans who have netted them. In order to apply the fable to human society—Florentine republic, the papal state, the various duchies that Leonardo knew well—we cross species, a routine enough matter in political fables of the time (Machiavelli's little menagerie: foxes, lions, wolves . . .). We read "human" society into and by means of these cities of the sea; the condition of boundness and confinement, the untranslatability of fish-language to the language of humans, these "translate" into descriptions of human circumstance, and serve as *types* of the situation of the human: human cities, human citizens, are figured in these fish schools. A coherent, well-known, Terentian doctrine is enunciated: the human is the universal (*nil a me alienum puto*); it contains multitudes, is the summation of all created beings; every form of life can be translated into the human. The association of the "universal genius" of Leonardo with the universality of what Cassirer famously called the "Renaissance philosophy of man" rests upon, and supports, this metaphoric translation. Burckhardt's Leonardo, as Freud reminds his readers, is precisely this universal figure, and figure of human universalism. And Leonardo's thought-image also and necessarily works in reverse. What we know as human activity, indeed as the foundational human activity, the foundation of political life or of life as biopolitics, is available to us symptomatically *only* or *primarily* in the figure of these cities of the sea. A clutch of double translations, in the form of a circle: from the city of the sea to the human, from the human to the citizens bound in bundles; from human laws (*legge*) to binding ties, and from the ties that bind Leonardo's fish together (*legare*) to the human city's laws; where the animal was, there will the human be—and vice versa as well.

What does it mean, then, that at the heart of Leonardo's strange and surreal thought-image lies the violent drama of nontranslation? That it is nontranslation, that is, the refusal of substitution and of representation, the violent rejection of linguistic or cultural similarity and mediation, that "substitutes for" or "translates" or "represents" (none of these words now being correct) the condition of citizenship? A wholly different doctrine concerning early modernity stands forth. (Nicholas Rand might say: is encrypted within the image.)[31] Fishers of men; speakers of Latin to the ignorant and the *infans*; a species apart; cities in the sky. One need not be quite so literalistic.

(Leonardo's heterodoxy sometimes comes close to anticlericalism, but he is careful: he translates himself; he censors himself.) For my purposes, Leonardo's image need only yield, in addition to the *trait d'union* or principle of translation between species and humans that we find in the thought-image's many circles, a *trait de division* or instance of radical and violent untranslatability. It will then provide us not only with a Renaissance philosophy of humanity, a principle for handing the indivisible sovereignty of the theological sphere over to a waiting, consubstantial humanist political sphere, attending where the theological domain will come, *but also* with an early modernity in which citizenship rests upon violence, division, miscommunication or noncommunication, coercion. Nothing will mediate between these two figures of thought and of civic identity; they are the same image, the same mark or *trait,* the same word, and they represent an antinomy; they (it) mark the limit of *mediation*. It is the work of culture, or of ideology, to bind them together—no longer in the fatuous ties provided by a sufficiently formalized or formal language, in the imagined and fantastical space of "l'*universitas litterarum* de toujours," much less in the physical space of the Amphitheatre Descartes, but in the *maille* or *maillot,* the imprisoning, forming, educating net with which the infant, the *infans* and the citizen, learns to speak his name.

It is this scenario that Lacan seeks to capture, on a different, technical order of argumentation, when he recalls, at the close of "Instance of the Letter," "the goal Freud's discovery proposes to man," "defined at the height of his thought in these moving terms: *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. Where it was I must come into being. This goal is one of reintegration and harmony, I might even say of reconciliation."[32] The same steps: if we began in violence and coercion, Lacan's essay *appears* to say, we end on a note of disciplinary and civic reconciliation. No longer do we find ourselves, as at the infancy of Enlightened modernity or "before" Freud, speaking different tongues, the philologians ruled by the philosophers or vice versa, fish ruled by fishermen, believers by the clergy, citizens by blind or supervisory sovereigns. Rather, the *Kulturarbeit* of civilization (in the verbal sense), the civilizing effect of the Renaissance and its proxy, Freud's account of "reason," serve to bind the infant, to naturalize the violence of the theologico-political encounter, and to translate that violence into a tongue in which the sovereign's, or the fisherman's, "no" or "yes" saves or condemns, and which all of us understand: a common tongue, commonly understood. (Posa stands in for Carlos, Carlos for Posa: the two deaths are made the same, or analogous at least; we lose their constitutive difference.)

But this therapeutic and conciliatory reading of Freud's line, Lacan then shows, is topologically and tropologically inaccurate, inasmuch as it ignores

the "self's radical ex-centricity to itself." For Lacan, Freud's famous phrase shockingly discloses this very ex-centricity, which it expresses in three internal antinomies: a difference of substance, between *Es* and *Ich;* of mode (*sollen,* the figure of command, but also of supposition, of counterfactuality); and of time (*war* against *werden,* a historical description and a providential or an ethical injunction: "I" must or should come to, arrive at, where "it" was). This ex-centricity of the self with respect to the position it imagines itself to occupy, and with respect to the position it wishes to occupy, or imagines itself at some point to arrive at—these two *topological* and *tropological* non- or mistranslations line up with an *ontological* misprision as well: the self is not what it is (what it thinks it is); I think where I do not think I think, says Lacan, revising Descartes. Revising Descartes, but also echoing the strange way that Leonardo's prophecy of the "Cities of the Sea" builds into itself a fantasy of translation and of nontranslation; of consubstantiality (between humans and their animal analogues) and of absolute disanalogy; a *trait d'union* and a *trait de division.* Echoing Leonardo, but also, whether he knows it or not, reading Freud's Schiller as well, attending to the sovereign signifiedness of Freud's words, which themselves, whether Freud himself remembered it or not, bring Schiller's contradictory fantasies of early modernity "within their ambit."

In 1918, fifteen years before Freud pens the line from *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* on which Lacan closes "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," Freud tells Lou-Andreas Salomé that he identifies with the older Schiller, that he wishes the revolution over as soon as possible (so that it will be "acceptable"), and that "what the human beast needs above all is restraint." It is altogether remarkable that at the "height of his thought" and toward the end of his career Freud should have remembered (or allowed within the ambit or borders of his essay on the structure of the psychic apparatus) an earlier Schiller, who in turn was recalling the complex *beginning* of a revolution he considered still unfinished, a new golden age or new Renaissance that turned on the epochal divisions at the heart of secularization and of the handoff, the *relève*, between politics and theology. We need not imagine a late, pathos-ridden return to the heroic vein: by this time Freud has seen too much to hazard much heroism of that trivial sort. The French and Russian revolutions may hasten to their *denouement*, to the place where they are attended by their institutionalization or by the terror of the administrative state (in the case of the French Revolution, called properly "the terror"). But Freud has understood—though *Don Karlos* is not directly before him—that Schiller's early play marks out in early modernity, in the fratricidal conflict between the play's two early modernities,

a spot where revolutions *perpetually begin,* not where they end. Where Posa differs from Carlos; where one death cannot stand in for another, cannot be grasped in place of another, cannot be its sacrifice or its *analogue*—there, Freud understands, a different, *primal* scene is acted out, and something, call it freedom or citizenship, *begins.*

5. Adorno and the Humanist Dialectic

> The civic degradation of the *pretenders*, that is what is intended! It is desired to rob them of their halo, of the last majesty that is left to them, the *majesty of exile*!
>
> —Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*

> That which is irreducible about the objects in film is itself a mark of society, prior to the aesthetic realization of an intention. By virtue of this relationship to the object, the aesthetics of film is thus inherently concerned with society.
>
> —Theodor W. Adorno, "Transparencies on Film"

In the introduction to the marvelous pieces on music that Edward Said collected as the Wellek lectures, in 1991, Said writes: "Adorno is a creature of the Hegelian tradition, which presumes an inescapable historical teleology that incorporates everything in its relentless path. This," Said continues, "I find unacceptable for all sorts of reasons."[1] In place of this "unacceptable" Hegelian historical teleology, Said advances a different notion of historical change. His great model is music; its escapability, its escapism, its condition of nonteleology—all of these, for Said, resemble nothing more than the condition he finds himself in and will write about so movingly in his last years, the condition of exile. "Transgressive" in a geographical sense, as the exile and émigré are also, "music has [the faculty] to travel, cross over, drift from place to place in a society, even though many institutions and orthodoxies have sought to confine it." Where the Hegelian tradition sees teleology, the aesthetic tradition that Said invokes in its place sees an "unhoused," "exilic," vulnerable wandering. To all that which in G. W. F. Hegel or Adorno requires the "relentless" assimilation of the aesthetic sphere into the sphere of representation, where it can become subject to the grinding, mechanical laws of contradiction, negation, and incorporation—to all this, Said says, he opposes a "romantic view," almost a Schilleresque view: "music," he says, "possesses a separate status and place that is occasionally revealed but more often withdrawn."[2] Victor Frankenstein "manufactures" a "creature," "infusing life into an inanimate body." Hegel's creature, Theodor Adorno, represents the unacceptable, mechanical afterlife of the determinate dialectic—a device for de-animating what is living about history, for "confining" whatever there is about it that wanders. Hegel's Adorno: a machine for turning what drifts

from place to place into a placeholder, into a thing defined by and confined to the space and time it occupies.

It comes as a bit of a surprise, then, to find that Said *also* claims to derive his account of this "romantic" "separate status and place" to which music belongs *from* Adorno—who is enrolled both in the monstrous and unacceptable "historical teleology" of the Hegelian tradition, and in the "romantic," Schilleresque, humanist tradition that Said's last works embrace. I say "a bit of a surprise," since of course one could make the reasonable, if rather weak, point that Adorno is hardly a philosopher without contradictions (and a similar, equally weak point about Said himself, of course), and that he might very well be found to take antagonistic positions over the course of his career, or indeed within a single work. Or one could point to the specific contradiction in Adorno's career—between the condemnation, on historico-political terms, of the "dialectics of Enlightenment," and the massive deployment of its concepts in his philosophical writing. Or one could make the stronger point that Adorno's conception of history allows, even requires, that images, historical figures or events, like the figure or image that we call "Adorno" or indeed like Adorno's great "romantic" precursor, Victor Frankenstein's monster, embody significant contradictions that can be both dialectically resolved and nondialectically juxtaposed at once—images or figures that call upon us to proceed toward them, as Walter Benjamin had put it, by means of "dialectics at a standstill" because such images *are* "dialectics at a standstill."[3] So really, Said's ambivalence toward Adorno seems of a piece with Adorno's work, and might even be said to represent a nicely dialectical aspect of Said's *own* work. To line Adorno up both on the side of the "unacceptably" teleological, voracious Hegelian tradition, and on the side of the errant and "exilic," humanistic, even liberal tradition is not a mistake but the result of a particularly good reading of the German philosopher. In short, we recognize in Said's Adorno a "dialectical image," and the spots of greatest instability in that "image," the aspects where the great mechanisms of dialectical reasoning meet up paradoxically and grindingly with unrepresentable negations, excesses, enjoyments, liberties, drives—the terms are all inadequate, and we will see why in a moment—are precisely where "Adorno" stands in for something like "the philosophy of modern music" and for something like "the exile" or "the émigré."

I can imagine two ways of approaching the "dialectical image" that is "Adorno," and hence of sketching out the ways in which the humanist dialectic excludes the specific account of mediation that Adorno, and "Adorno," provide. Both of them necessarily sit, uneasily, on the mobile border that lies between disciplinary and meta-disciplinary arguments. I will postpone for the moment describing the spot in Said and in cultural critics who follow him,

but also in the work of Jean-François Lyotard and other more recognizably "philosophical" writers, the spot where "Adorno" stands in for the first of these, "the philosophy of modern music." I turn to Adorno's musical diabolism at the conclusion of this chapter, when I consider how Adorno's thought *about* music concludes on a "dialectical image," dynamic and unsettled at the same time as it is fixed, an interval rather than a note, a species of tritone whose characteristics are then transferred to the figure of "Adorno" himself, a devil or a monster in the machinery of twentieth-century philosophy. For now, though, my tack into Adorno's critique of the humanist dialectic will take the other of these roads: the road on which the exile and the monster walk in hand, or meet, or struggle, like Victor and his creature—but which is which? Which of the two is the monster? The exile? What do we mean by each of these terms? Why does the term "exile," like the exiled "Adorno" himself, ring for us today, in the shadow of the twentieth century's exiles, in such contradictory registers? Why has the condition of "exile" acquired such thick, contradictory values in the symbolic economy of the postwar period? What are the conditions under which the commodity-value of the term and the condition of "exile" change, in that symbolic or cultural economy? And finally, how might those concrete conditions inflect the character and characterization of this dialectical image we call "Adorno"?

Filmediation, or, Radical Exile

Here is a preliminary way to characterize the contradictoriness of the exile's position and of the position of the dialectical image of "exile" in today's culture. The words are Adorno's. "The American government," Adorno wrote in his late radio-talk essay on Siegfried Kracauer,

> was superior to that of many European nations during the Hitler era in that it granted all emigrants the possibility of working and did not reduce any of them to the permanent status of welfare recipients. Conversely, the burden of conformity, which weighed upon the natives as well, was especially harsh. Intellectual immigrants who were already successful were enthusiastic advocates of that conformity. Adjustment became again the norm it had been in the early development of most of them, internalized by all those who would hardly have been able to cope with their external and internal difficulties other than through the psychological mechanism Anna Freud called identification with the aggressor.[4]

What seems especially striking about this retrospective assessment is the oddly fated circuit it describes for the "intellectual immigrant," whose earlier "success," presumably the result of "conformity" and "adjustment" in his or

her native setting and environment, found in America a norm that exactly and easily translated a previous disciplinary, or legal, or ethnic "conformism" or "adjustment" into "conformity" with American society, values, and so on. The "aggressor" with whom the émigré might have been *forced* to identify was now embraced, in the tropic form of the welcoming society. Emigration and exile obeyed a logic of repetition and reenactment; the émigré repeated the pathological relation to instituted power that had both made him a success in the first place, and marked him with the abject identity of the victim. From this perspective, the position of the exile—the émigré—attests for Adorno *both to* an opening, to the possibility of "working," of achieving the "protection given by a certain bourgeois solidity," as he wrote in August 1941 to Horkheimer, *but also* to a pathology of repetition and, more gravely still, to the reinstatement of and re-submission to, to a re-identification with, the position of the "aggressor."[5] In the slightly different economic register that Adorno's late comment also employs, the psychological ambivalence that attaches to the position of the émigré or the exile corresponds to an unsettled or divided value-form: exiles or émigrés who find themselves in this new country, this America, settle in both by assuming the value-form granted by the market to which they are transported, *and* by retaining and seeking to repeat the value-forms they trail from their native land, environment, market. The two can never coincide, in fact; it is the condition of each to differ from the other, and the exile or the émigré lives this unsettled condition. What Adorno calls "conformity," what he calls the "enthusiastic advocacy" of conformity by the "successful" intellectual émigré, works on the psychological level as a form of denial (as does, in Anna Freud's conception, the mechanism of "identification with the aggressor") and on the economic level as a mystification of the instability of the exile's value, when the exile is understood as a commodity.[6]

And finally—what was exile, or the émigré position, when it was approached not psychologically, or even economically, but as a philosophical-disciplinary matter? Does it, did it, too present the sort of complex contradictions found on those other registers? Of course, the three registers cannot readily be disentangled from one another; a complicated flow of mutual determinations, thickenings, and substitutions runs among them, passing each through the other two, the psychology of exile through the economics of the exile's value-form, both of these through the philosophical questions the condition (or perhaps the concept) raise, and so on. Here, for now, is another way into the running braid, or perhaps the three-part invention, that the three registers form.

Consider these prescient lines from Said's last major work, published ten

years before the second Iraqi war, before the events of September 11, 2001, before the second intifada, before the rise of MSNBC and Fox News, before the military hegemony of the United States had assumed its current unilateral shape. These are Said's words, at the close of *Culture and Imperialism*. He is describing a particular disciplinary-mediatic formation.

> On the one hand we have the co-optations of foreign-area expertise by the academy (only experts on India can talk about India, only Africanists about Africa), and on the other reaffirmations of these co-optations by both media and the government. These rather slow and silent processes are put in startling evidence, revealed impressively and suddenly, during periods of foreign crisis for the United States and its interests—for example, the Iranian hostage crisis, the shooting down of Korean Airlines flight 007, the *Achille Lauro* affair, the Libyan, Panamanian, and Iraqi wars. Then, as if by an open sesame as unarguably obeyed as it is planned to the last detail, public awareness is saturated with media analysis and stupendous coverage. Thus experience is emasculated. Adorno says:
>
> > The total obliteration of the war by information, propaganda, commentaries, with cameramen in the first ranks and war reporters dying heroic deaths, the mishmash of an enlightened manipulation of public opinion and oblivious vacuity: all this is another expression for the withering of experience, the vacuum between people and their fate, in which their real fate lies. It is as if the reified, hardened plaster cast of events takes the place of events themselves. People are reduced to walk-on parts in a monster documentary film.[7]

This is the German of the thought-image from *Minima Moralia* that Said is citing: "Die vollständige Verdeckung des Krieges durch Information, Propaganda, Kommentar, die Filmoperateure in den ersten Tanks und der Heldentod von Kriegsberichterstattern, die Maische aus manipuliert-aufgeklärter öffentlicher Meinung und bewußtlosem Handeln, all das ist ein anderer Ausdruck für die verdorrte Erfahrung, das Vakuum zwischen den Menschen und ihrem Verhängnis, in dem das Verhängnis recht eigentlich besteht. Der verdinglichte, erstarrte Abguß der Ereignisse substituiert gleichsam diese selber. Die Menschen werden zu Schauspielern eines Monstre-Documentairefilms herabgesetzt."[8] Here, at the end of an intricate treatment of what Said calls "the internalization of norms used in cultural discourse" (323), concluding a concluding chapter called provocatively "Freedom from Domination in the Future," Adorno is given a walk-on part, "as if by an open sesame," in Said's argument, enlisted to the project of showing how this "internalization of norms" "emasculates" experience (Adorno's term, generally translated as "withering," is the slightly less gender-specific *verdorrt*). The hollowed-out,

reified "plaster casts" of events stand in place of the event (of the experience of the event), as the monster documentary's *scripted* "walk-on" part (*Schauspiel*) awaits the "extra" who will fill it. Adorno's lovely, subtle, and entirely appropriate thought-image is a complicated sort of oxymoron—a "monster documentary," both fictional, in being about "monsters"; a documentary, claiming realism for the "monsters" it represents (and in 1944 we must credit Adorno with a bitter sense of just how "monstrous" the merely "real" could show itself to be); and "monstrous," generically or technically, in being, for instance, monstrously *long*, or monstrously de-monstrative. This portmanteau word surely chimes, in its very *instability*, with the avenue for hope that Said finds at this moment, the vehicle for producing a "future" free, as he will have it, from domination. What is the nature of this *instability*? It is tacitly associated with the very next section of the Adorno citation: with what these monster documentaries represent. For Said, as his last writings on humanism suggest, this instability is both a formal and an ethical imperative, as well as a circumstance of postmodernity: in place of the massification of media *but also* in place of an exhausted modernism, in place of "the elaborate interpretative strategies of critical theory or the self-consciousness of literary and musical forms," Said suggests we should turn to "more reliable" accounts of resistance, which will provide a kind of mixed monster documentary, if you will: "More reliable now are the reports from the front line where struggles are being fought between domestic tyrants and idealist oppositions, hybrid combinations of realism and fantasy, cartographic and archaeological descriptions, explorations in mixed forms (essay, video or film, photograph, memoir, story, aphorism) of unhoused exilic experiences."[9]

In order to achieve this "hope" Said places the concept and the experience of "instability" in the consciousness of the culture that regards itself, at these moments, as if from outside as well as within these scripted parts, from both positions, expressed in a "hybrid" form corresponding to the "unhoused exilic experience" of, say, the Palestinian intellectual, the German refugee, or the deterritorialized subject. This "unhousedness" is both fundamental to the experience of seeing oneself as a husk, and the content of what one "sees," as the condition for "transgressing" the geographico-cultural boundaries of the enclosing, imprisoning subjectivities offered in late-stage capitalism: it is the opposite, for Said, of the "withered" or "shriveled" or "emasculated" experience peddled by the culture and information industries; "unhousedness" is the opposite of the movie house. Paradoxically, we would not be wrong to detect in Said's explicitly anti-Hegelian words an association of wandering externality, of an identity productively negated by its being-away-from-itself, with self-awareness and aesthetic appreciation that smacks

strongly of passages in Hegel's *Aesthetics,* or in Bradley's work, or indeed in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory.* We wouldn't want to be perverse about this: Said would insist, as he understands it *contra* Adorno, that the necessary moment of externalization or exiling is not the same as, and does not lead necessarily to, a determined re-inscription of that experience within a set, already given form of identity. (For instance: the émigré would not necessarily find himself repeating the pathologies of assimilation and conformity that had made him a success in his lost home; the value of the exile commodity-form could be carried with that form, and be as it were immanent to it or transportable alongside it.) Nevertheless, Said's work on humanism does indeed turn on something like an economization of the experience of exile. The two-step required for Said's "instability" to produce, from the ashes of domination, a "future" *without* domination, means taking the "romantic" aestheticization of culture as a vehicle for the production (*a* vehicle, rather than *the* vehicle, mind you—there are others) of hybrid forms in which "unhousedness" can be "housed" or experienced. Said's argument, in brief, requires a sort of Hegelianism without determination, and his account of the future perfections of the exile's culture depends on the conversion of "experience" into "consciousness" in much the way that Hegel's account does (*Geist* is the first truly modern exile). In this context, then, Adorno is Said's proxy and model (and not, or not only, his Hegelian antagonist, the monstrous creature of the Hegelian tradition): he represents, in this very specific way, the precursor experience to Said's own unhousedness. (I am not saying that Adorno is the only such "house," precursor, plaster cast, reified husk—"verdinglichte, erstarrte Abguß der Ereignisse"—or model—Said has many of them: Freud, Wittgenstein . . .) Adorno's image and his thought are the "husk" into which the unhoused Palestinian intellectual will migrate, temporarily, a "husk" that is welcoming and paradoxically homey precisely because it, too, designates a way of thinking from the place of the exile; a kind of plaster cast into which Said fits himself despite its edges and roughnesses, knowing he can never be fully conformable to Adorno's thought concerning the disconformity of the exiled, "successful," and conformable intellectual.

Just where the plaster cast of Adorno does not fit, just where the two exiles' conceptions of exile's mixed value, mixed or contradictory philosophical and affective import diverge, becomes clear when we look a little further. For the passage from the *Minima Moralia* that Said's *Culture and Imperialism* employs does not end where Said leaves off—and the balance of Adorno's fragment screens for us a much scarier "monster documentary," as it were, than Said allows us to "see." In the spirit of the thought-image, one might say that Said has decapitated this little fragment, as it were, to

prevent us (or to prevent himself) from "seeing" something far worse. For in Adorno's "monster documentary," the *Minima Moralia* passage continues, "men are reduced to walk-on parts in a monster documentary film which has no spectators, since the least of them has his bit to do on the screen." The fragment continues:

> It is just this aspect that underlies the much-maligned designation "phony war." Certainly, the term has its origins in the Fascist inclination to dismiss the reality of horrors as "mere propaganda" in order to perpetrate it unopposed. But like all Fascist tendencies, this too has its source in elements of reality, which assert themselves only by virtue of the Fascist attitude malignantly insinuating them. The war is really phony, but with a phonyness more horrifying than all the horrors, and those who mock at it are principal contributors to disaster.
>
> Had Hegel's philosophy of history embraced this age, Hitler's robot-bombs would have found their place beside the early death of Alexander and similar images, as one of the selected empirical facts by which the state of the world-spirit manifests itself directly in symbols [*unmittelbar symbolisch sich ausdruckt*]. Like Fascism itself, the robots career without a subject. Like it they combine utmost technical perfection with total blindness. And like it they arouse mortal terror [or horror] and are wholly futile [*Wie jener erregen sie das toedlichste Entsetzen und sind ganz vergeblich*]. "I have seen the world spirit," not on horse-back, but on wings and without a head, and that refutes, at the same stroke, Hegel's philosophy of history.[10]
>
> The genesis of the belabored talk of the "phony war" lay in precisely this moment. It originated to be sure from the Fascist technique of dismissing the real horrors of the war as "mere propaganda," precisely in order to facilitate those horrors. Yet like all tendencies of Fascism, this too has its origin in elements of reality, which ends up prevailing only by virtue of that Fascist attitude, which sneeringly hinted at such. The war really is "phony" [in English], but its "phonyness" [in English] is more terrifying than any terror, and those who make light of this only contribute that much more to the calamity.[11]

(Die Menschen werden zu Schauspielern eines Monstre-Documentairefilms herabgesetzt, der keine Zuschauer mehr kennt, weil noch der letzte auf der Leinwand mittun muß.

Eben dies Moment liegt der vielgescholtenen Rede vom phony war zugrunde. Sie entspringt gewiß aus der faschistischen Stimmung, die Realität des Grauens als "bloße Propaganda" von sich zu weisen, damit das Grauen einspruchslos sich vollziehe. Aber wie alle Tendenzen des Faschismus hat auch diese ihren Ursprung in Elementen der Realität, die sich nur eben gerade kraft

> jener faschistischen Haltung durchsetzen, die hämisch auf sie hindeutet. Der Krieg ist wirklich phony, aber seine phonyness schrecklicher als aller Schrecken, und die sich darüber mokieren, tragen vorab zum Unheil bei.
>
> Hätte Hegels Geschichtsphilosophie diese Zeit eingeschlossen, so hätten Hitlers Robotbomben, neben dem frühen Tod Alexanders und ähnlichen Bildern, ihre Stelle gefunden unter den ausgewählten empirischen Tatsachen, in denen der Stand des Weltgeists unmittelbar symbolisch sich ausdrückt. Wie der Faschismus selber sind die Robots lanciert zugleich und subjektlos. Wie jener vereinen sie die äußerste technische Perfektion mit vollkommener Blindheit. Wie jener erregen sie das tödlichste Entsetzen und sind ganz vergeblich. — "Ich habe den Weltgeist gesehen," nicht zu Pferde, aber auf Flügeln und ohne Kopf, und das widerlegt zugleich Hegels Geschichtsphilosophie.)[12]

Now the beheading of Hegel that Adorno accomplishes by means of the wholly futile (*ganz vergeblich*) is precisely what Said is not willing to accept, not now, and not where he most closely deals with Adorno. Adorno may be Said's anti-Hegelian proxy in some respects, but not in this one: for the plaster mask to fit, Adorno must be anti-Hegelian in a sense that Said can recognize and turn to advantage. For Said cannot quite see how to achieve a "future" free of domination, without building the path to that "future" upon the minimal norm, the regulative idea, provided by the concept of "unhoused exilic experience." The normative mediation of (the figure, the experience of) exile, then—this is Said's residual dialectic, the monstrous mask of his closeted Hegelianism. It is against this *positive* dialectical norm that Adorno is arguing here. What occurs historically will emerge from the present under the trope of, on the wings of, a different sort of movement than Said's dialectic imagines: Adorno's monstrous mediations are not just blind but headless. They fly on wings but without direction; theirs is a specifically nondialectical (and not antidialectical) movement. Adorno's wild mediations move: not, certainly, in the way that "robot bombs" move, but also not by means of an unhoused or exilic aesthetic principle that carries its value on its back with it, country to country.

Let me try to be more specific about the nature of Adorno's critique of the normative figure of exile. We ask: what sort of mediation *is* Adorno proposing, under the aspect of the wholly futile, of the headless? Consider two of Adorno's expressions: the "monster documentary," used to characterize war films and war propaganda; and the expressions "phony war" and "really phony" war. Where does Adorno get these words from abroad, these images or turns of phrase, marked off as slightly foreign in the text of *Minima Moralia,* émigrés or exiles from other languages, ringing out in English from the

German text—"phony war"—or echoing in French—*monstre-documentaire*? Can one ask the question "Where does Adorno get this image?" without falling into the positivist temptations that so nettle Adorno during his time at the Radio Project? What sorts of mediations, factual interferences, alternative medialities, wild materialisms disturb and condition our analysis of Adorno's argument? Our experience of his prose? I am going to defer my explicit answer to the second, methodological questions for a bit, and provide what will seem like positive grounds for answering the first question. (In fact, the search for these positive grounds runs us necessarily into the methodological quandary.)

About the sinister notion that Europe was merely engaged in a "phony war" we can be brief. The notion had a great deal of currency in isolationist camps in Britain and, obviously for much longer, in the United States—where one heard about the "phony war" from 1938 until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Senator William Borah is most often associated with the notion that Great Britain and France "pulled their punches" on the Western front, in 1938 and 1939, and that this indicated *at least* some sort of weak-willed response to aggression on the part of Russia and Germany, but more probably, Borah and others darkly intimated, a secret wish, hidden behind the "phoniness" of the response to Fascist belligerence, to provoke the United States to join the war precisely *because of* the failure to contain aggression. "Phony" here meant not only, in short, "false," but also *deliberately and perniciously* false: a mask of weakness assumed to lure the United States into the theater of war.[13] This sort of innuendo, persistent and demoralizing, did not sit well with the people fighting. The British war secretary, Oliver Stanley, made headlines in March 1940 when he angrily denounced those who called the European theater, "in language culled from the ringside, a phony war. This is a phrase," Stanley said, "used by people who, after a good dinner, sit down and urge two fighters to tear each other to pieces."[14] Adorno's use of the expression "phony war"—"The war is really phony [*Der Krieg ist wirklich phony,* it "really *is* phony" and it is "really phony," not just a little bit], but with a phonyness more horrifying than all the horrors, and those who mock at it are principal contributors to disaster"—builds on this tragic ground. *Minima Moralia* turns the device used by Borah, Lindbergh, and other isolationists to promote neutrality—the phoniness, the claims regarding the unreality of the war's supposed facts—into the "reality" of the state of affairs under Fascism and in the "neutral" or isolationist bands. To be a witness to the "monster documentary" is in reality to play a bit part in it: the part of the spectator who, shown "monstrosities" as if they were "documentary" evidence and invited to reject them therefore as far-fetched pseudofacts, is acting a more

terrible part still—a part made the more terrible inasmuch as there is no one to watch it, inasmuch as it plays for no objective public. *This* "monster documentary" no longer seeks even to persuade: it folds its public into itself, and enacts thereby not only the liquidation of any "objective" standpoint with regard to the "facts" it claims to document, but also any "subjective" experience of the (second-order) "fact" of its projection, of its documentariness, of its presumed objectivity, even of its objectality. Adorno's oxymoronic expression "really phony" carries an immense charge, then: misread, it may be understood to describe a sort of lexical neutralization, of the "real" by the "phony" and vice versa. In this sense, the two terms, combined, promote isolationism, the catastrophe. Yes, the inclusion of the spectator within the film has a total or totalitarian effect—here Adorno seems to be echoing Kracauer's comments regarding the function of film in the rise of National Socialism—but it also and for this very reason spells the end of a certain model of reflection, of a certain economization of the experience of terror or horror that is cast by Adorno as a specific critique of Hegelianism.[15]

So how *are* we to read the expression "really phony" against this risk of catastrophic neutralization? How should Adorno's readers understand the non-neutralizing, nondialectical contradiction between the "phony" and the "real"? What sort of fact, object, or event can be both "phony" and "real," without condemning both terms and the spectator, the political agent or the critic that they modify, to the thoughtlessness of the empty movie house?

The "monster documentary" we find in this same section of *Minima Moralia* provides a first answer to these questions; the figure of the exile, the more extended and conceptually precise one. The German word "monster" isn't uncommon in Adorno's work; even in *Minima Moralia* we run into it a number of times—for instance, in the fragment called "Mammoth," which opens observing that "Some years ago, the report circulated in American newspapers about the discovery of a well-preserved dinosaur in the state of Utah. It was emphasized that the specimen in question had outlived its species and was a million years younger than any hitherto known. Such reports, like the repulsively humorous craze for the Loch Ness monster and the King Kong film, are collective projections of the monstrous total state." We find it again in "Customer service," which concludes linking opera and film, "The cadence of every film however is that of the witch, who serves soup to the little ones she wants to ensorcel or devour, with the hideous murmur, 'Yummy soup, yummy soup? You'll enjoy it, you'll enjoy it . . .' In art," Adorno continues, "this kitchen fire-magic was discovered by Wagner, whose linguistic intimacies and musical spices are always tasting themselves, and who simultaneously demonstrated the entire procedure, with the genius'

compulsion of confession, in the scene of the Ring, where Mime offers Siegfried the poisoned potion. Who however is supposed to chop off the monster's head, now that its blond locks have lain for a long time under the linden tree [*Wer aber soll dem Monstrum den Kopf abschlagen*?]."

Adorno's monsters crop up in "Small pains, great songs," which opens observing that "Contemporary mass culture is historically necessary not merely as the consequence of the embrace of the entire life by monster enterprises [*als Folge der Umklammerung des gesamten Lebens durch Monstreunternehmen*], but as the consequence of what today seems most utterly opposed to the prevailing standardization of consciousness, aesthetic subjectification." Monstrosity, too, makes an appearance: "Gala dinner" ends:

> If 19th century connoisseurs sat down only for one act of an opera, with the barbaric aside that they wouldn't cut their dinner short for any spectacle, then meanwhile the barbarism, which has cut off the possibility of escape to dinner, cannot stuff itself enough with its own culture. Every program must be sat through to the end, every "best seller" [in English in original] must be read, every film must be seen during its first release in the movie theater. The abundance of what is consumed without choice becomes calamitous. It makes it impossible to find one's way, and just as one looks for a guide in a monstrous department store, so too does the population, penned in by attractions, wait for a leader of their own. [*Die Fülle des wahllos Konsumierten wird unheilvoll. Sie macht es unmöglich, sich zurechtzufinden, und wie man im monströsen Warenhaus nach einem Führer sucht, wartet die zwischen Angeboten eingepeilte Bevölkerung auf den ihren.*]

"Vandals" speaks of the "monstrous apparatus of pleasure" (Darum allein erhält der monströse Vergnügungsapparat sich am Leben und schwillt immer mehr auf), "Extra edition" of "Concepts like sadism and masochism no longer suffice. In the mass society of technical dissemination they are mediated by sensation, by the cometlike, far removed, to-the-extreme new. It overwhelms the public, which squirms under the shock and forgets who the monstrosity is being perpetrated on, oneself or others (Es überwältigt das Publikum, das unterm Schock sich windet und vergißt, wem das Ungeheure angetan ward, einem selbst oder anderen)"; the fifth "Thesis against Occultism" maintains that "Occultists rightly feel drawn to childishly monstrous natural-scientific fantasies (Mit Recht fühlen die Okkulten von kindisch monströsen naturwissenschaftlichen Phantasien sich angezogen)." The confusion they create between their emanations and the isotopes of uranium, is ultimate clarity. The mystic rays are modest anticipations of the technical ones." Monsters bear unexpected weight conceptually, as one of the many places in which an alternative to the sort of "relentless" machinery of deterministic

Hegelianism is being exposed. For the dialectic in its classic sense there are no monsters—if by "monster" we mean a singularity, an unclassifiable term, a being characterized by its immediacy, to be pointed out without the hope that this indexical gesture will return us to history or to consciousness, by means of the dialectic of sense-certainty, of pointing and indexicality, we find (for instance) at the opening of Hegel's *Phenomenology.* The monstrous in *this* Hegelian sense—the immediate singularity of a term or a sense-datum—is destined to come to rest in the documentary—in the schematic plane of representation, where it can be presented for consumption—and to this extent it reveals itself to have been, always and already, *less* than monstrous, a commodity. As in *King Kong,* when the "eighth wonder of the world," as the ape was called, in coming to New York is reinscribed into the filmic paradigm from which the project of going to Skull Island in the first place took shape, a circular journey, a total domain from which there are and can be no exiles. In this circle, from New York to Skull Island and back, from the domain of the romance film to that of the documentary and back, the real and the phony are immediately in contradiction: and this immediacy, signaled by the circular relation that binds the two terms, leaves no room for the *truly* monstrous. Hegel has in mind this nonmonstrosity of what immediately appears when *he* discusses the huge, tremendous or frightful, *ungeheure*: "monstrous," quality of the *negative*, in the preface to the *Phenomenology.* We have not even encountered the drama of sense-certainty, and already Hegel famously warns us against an immediate apprehension of the singular:

> To break an idea up into its original elements is to return to its moments, which at least do not have the form of the given idea, but rather constitute the immediate property of the self. This analysis, to be sure, only arrives at thoughts which are themselves familiar, fixed, and inert determinations. But what is thus separated and non-actual is an essential moment; for it is only because the concrete does divide itself, and make itself into something non-actual, that it is self-moving. The activity of dissolution is the power and work of the *Understanding*, the most astonishing and mightiest of powers, or rather the absolute power. The circle that remains self-enclosed and, like substance, holds its moments together, is an immediate relationship, one therefore which has nothing astonishing about it. But that an accident as such, detached from what circumscribes it, what is bound and is actual only in its context with others, should attain an existence of its own and a separate freedom—this is the tremendous power of the negative, it is the energy of thought, of the pure "I" . . . [*Die ungeheure Macht des Negativen; es ist die Energie des Denkens, des reinen Ichs*.][16]

This analytic, divisive, negative enormity is *not* the primary sense that the term "monster" has when qualifying the word "documentary" in this section of *Minima Moralia* (though it is not far from Adorno's argument). It is likely that the film *King Kong,* though it is set to work in the earlier parts of the group of fragments, is similarly *not* the only "monster documentary" that Adorno is envisioning here. Again, however, such monsters are not far from *Minima Moralia*. This section of Adorno's work is devoted to the "firing line," and it describes not the pseudoethnographic monster documentary featuring Fay Wray and others—not the figure of King Kong, whose monstrous assimilation into the figure of Hitler he advances a little later—but "documentaries" whose "monstrosity" is of a different sort from this. (It should be noted, not unrelatedly, that the path leading from New York to Skull Island and back is only to be conceived as a circle when we set off from the metropolis. The ape does not return to the island; starting off from the colony, the monster's path is sadly linear. King Kong only returns to Skull Island posthumously, when his immense body has been reduced to bones and, precisely, skull. He returns, we might say, tropically as well as tropologically, when the name of the island is taken, in a manner of speaking, literally. A wild critique of the violent Eurocentrism of dialectical reason could be built upon the dissymmetry, the mutual untranslatability, of these two movements.)

It seems likely that Adorno's "monster documentary" engages *also* and more directly, in addition to Hegel's figure for immediately reflexive thought and the great simian and other filmic monsters that preoccupy Adorno elsewhere in *Minima Moralia,* with Kracauer's 1942 pamphlet "Propaganda and the Nazi War Film," "made possible," Kracauer tells his readers somewhat later, "by a Rockefeller grant" and "originally serving the purposes of psychological warfare."[17] In this pamphlet Kracauer had analyzed the weekly newsreels put out by the Nazi office of propaganda, as well as two feature-length campaign films, *Feuertaufe* and *Sieg im Westen,* which opened in New York and Los Angeles in 1940 and which had played in Europe and Turkey to notorious effect.[18] Each of the full-length propaganda films presented a rather thorny problem: what Thomas Pryor, writing in the *New York Times* on May 18, 1941, called "a puzzler": "whether the German war film, 'Sieg im Westen' is a newsreel or a 'feature film which should have been submitted to the State Board of Regents for censorship.'"[19] The matter was legally delicate, but also fascinating as a work, one might say, of cultural criticism *avant la lettre*. Ultimately, the challenges mounted by the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to the showing of *Sieg im Westen* were denied, on the court's judgment that the film was indeed to be classified as a newsreel, and hence con-

stituted a protected form of expression, like newspapers. The Non-Sectarian League had objected on four grounds to the film's distribution when they brought the case against UFA. "1) The film," the League maintained, "does not consist completely of news 'shots.' Several scenes were posed; 2) a musical score was 'dubbed in'; 3) the film lasts for almost two hours; 4) there is a connected narrative." The Customs Bureau of New York had classified the film as a "feature picture." *Sieg im Westen* opened in New York at the Ninety-Sixth Street Theatre on May 7, 1941, to "anti-Nazi pickets pacing the sidewalk outside the theatre," as the *New York Times* stringer reported it—pickets organized by the German-American Congress for Democracy, the group Friends of Democracy, and the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League.[20] Bosley Crowther, writing for the *Times* three days later, called the occasion "A perfect opportunity to study the technique of the propaganda film," and went on to identify *Sieg im Westen* as "undoubtedly the famous picture which Franz von Papen is supposed to have shown the Turks in an effort to frighten them into signing upon the Axis line. It is earmarked for Latin America, if it hasn't already been seen there. And the purpose quite obviously of releasing it to the United States is to whip up the Nazi converts and win as many more new ones as possible. . . . But whether it will frighten anyone who doesn't want to be frightened remains to be seen."[21]

Feuertaufe opened in Berlin on April 5, 1940, to an invitation audience hosted by Goering, and on April 4 in Rome. The unpleasantly admiring *New York Times* correspondents, George Axelsson in Berlin and an unnamed stringer from Rome, seem to agree on the point best expressed by the Roman correspondent: "Members of the audience to whom your correspondent spoke agreed that the impression made on them was one of respect for German might but also of sympathy for the Poles. The picture was not intended to inspire good-will for Germany, it was said, but to strike terror. From that viewpoint, it was a great success. The audience, in fact, seemed to have been horrified."[22] *Feuertaufe* was used in Norway, the neutral European press as well as the United States press reported, "to strengthen confidence inside Germany itself [and] produce such shattering effects abroad in the neutral countries as to keep alive a wholesome respect for the military machine which is capable of striking such terrible blows."[23]

In Denmark, *Feuertaufe*, described by the *Washington Post* correspondent as "portraying a grim baptism of fire which was Poland's penalty for daring to resist, was promptly installed in one of Copenhagen's biggest theatres to help persuade the Danes they had chosen the wisest course."[24] The German films provided material for counterpropaganda films like "The World at War." About this film, one reviewer said in September 1942 that "Most of the foot-

Figure 11. "Feuerteufe: Der Film vom Einsatz unserer Luftwaffe in Polen" (*Baptism of Fire*) (documentary), April 5, 1940. Reichsluftfahrtministerium, Tobis Filmkunst GmbH.

age [for a section of "The World at War"] has been taken from confiscated Nazi films—two of which, 'Feldszug in Polen' [which Kracauer consistently confuses, it should be said, with *Feuertaufe*] and 'Sieg im Westen' have been seen in this country. Too brutal almost for realization are the pictures here of cities destroyed. . . . Spread across the face of America, 'The World at War' should stimulate a grim resolve."[25]

The section of *Minima Moralia* before us, and before Said, concludes again invoking the diabolical, in the context of a "newsreel" depicting "the invasion of the Marianas, including Guam." Adorno asks his reader to envision an economy, even a physics of infinite loss:

> The logic of history is as destructive as the people that it brings to prominence: wherever its momentum carries it, it reproduces equivalents of past calamity [Die Logik der Geschichte ist so destruktiv wie die Menschen, die sie zeitigt: wo immer ihre Schwerkraft hintendiert, reproduziert sie das Äquivalent des vergangenen Unheils]. . . . Satanically, indeed, more initiative is in a sense demanded here than in old-style war: it seems to cost the subject his whole

> energy to achieve subjectlessness [Dabei das Satanische, daß in gewisser Weise mehr Initiative beansprucht wird als im Krieg alten Stils, daß es gleichsam die ganze Energie des Subjekts kostet, die Subjektlosigkeit herbeizuführen].

This thought-image is not quite in accord with the companion trope of the headless "history," though both draw upon and are fleshed out by means of the same reservoir of "monstrous" figures and figures of monstrous mediation—Hegelian, Hollywoodesque, documentary. The "reproduction of equivalents of past calamity," a "Satanic" momentum driving the subject toward subjectlessness—these are precisely *not* "headless," aleatory, blind, or contingent movements such as would characterize the robot-bomb deprived of a steering mechanism, or the headless horseman that the Spirit of History or world-spirit appears to become. Rather, Adorno's physics of endless loss rests upon a mediating figure, a trope for mediation acting "behind," and devising the entropic erosion of, subjectivity, a monstrous twin of Maxwell's demon: "Satan," Adorno calls it, or as we might also observe, the roughly Freudian structure of "reproducing equivalents," that is, of repetition. For "equivalents" are such only when they are measured against a standard of value that one can approach precisely, and which doesn't vary (one can apply a rule and say "this catastrophe is the equivalent of that, under these conditions, in these circumstances": for instance, the Holocaust is "reproduced" or can be made equivalent to other catastrophes, which is why, as Adorno writes in this section, it is only an "interlude" and not the catastrophe itself).

The instability Adorno has devised operates, tropologically, between the headless figure and the satanic one, which are confused but radically incompatible: indifferent, yet utterly different; and to operate between a conceptualization of history dependent upon the headless contingency of occurrent facts, and a conceptualization of history in which things can and necessarily do repeat, according to pernicious or evil, even satanic designs, rhythms, or intervals. A stable understanding of history is its first casualty; a positivist account of the "fact," its second; a humanistic account of the exile, that plaster cast or *facies hippocratica* (as Benjamin would say, and Adorno would echo) that the cultural critic inhabits, is its third casualty. In the fragment of *Minima Moralia* that we are reading, the burden of reconciling these two movements, these two conceptualizations of history, falls to the exceptionally knotty verb *tendieren,* to tend, incline, lean toward something—neither an intentional nor a nonintentional verb, but rather something fruitfully intermediate or indeterminate ("Die Logik der Geschichte ist so destruktiv wie die Menschen, die sie zeitigt: wo immer ihre Schwerkraft hintendiert, reproduziert sie das Äquivalent des vergangenen Unheils," weakly translated by

Jephcott as "wherever *its momentum carries it*, it reproduces equivalents of past calamity"; my emphasis).[26] It is here too—where the figure of the mediating demon meets the "headless" principle of historical change, and the resulting substantive "acts" on the wings of the personal-impersonal, determinate-indeterminate verb *tendieren*, that we understand most clearly the difference between Adorno's notion of "exile" and Said's later, humanistic one. Imagine, in this empty theater to which Adorno has consigned us, that the "really phony" events of this divided history appear to us (that we appear to ourselves as the "really phony" actors in the "monster documentary" we find ourselves in). They are, of course, the "plaster casts" of events, presented to our sight, to the eyes our *facies hippocratica* bears allegorically. The "plaster casts" we see are always the death masks or the traces of the event already past; the walk-on parts Adorno describes for us, walk-on parts that empty out the theater, are those scripted parts into which the audience member fits himself or herself. The positive "fact" in general is now divided, subjectively as well as objectively—the sort of fact that might be adduced in answer to a question like "Where did Adorno get this image?"; a statement of fact like "Adorno's 'monster documentary' comes from a reading of Kracauer's reviews of *Feuertaufe,* of his concern to understand *King Kong,* out of his engagement with the monstrosity of immediacy in Hegel's *Phenomenology.*"

But say we want to make this divided fact, this division of the fact, into the ground of an experience, an identity; into some sort of subjectivity to which the *tendential* act would belong, an indeterminate predication corresponding to an indeterminate or mobile subject. Let's say we choose, with Said, to refer to this sort of tendential, unhoused subjectivity under the term of "exile." Adorno is still unconvinced that this dialectical recovery *works.* The fact of exile, the condition and the noun, are walk-on parts, a *facies hippocratica,* a plaster mask, the preexisting script into which the émigré must step in order to bear value and identity, however he understands them. The affective trap that this unhousing of the positive fact puts us in is disabling, for the two positions to which it leads, melancholia or mourning on the one side, automatism on the other—are equally problematical. Adorno may be one of Said's proxies, assigned a walk-on part in the Palestinian critic's theater of memories; a stand-in for a specific sort of thought about exile, whose Hegelianism Said now inhabits, now seeks to cast aside. But Adorno's thought is also the death mask, the plaster mask, the posthumous trace, *avant la lettre*, of Said's conception of "unhoused," "exilic" identity and experience. Adorno and *Minima Moralia* assume in advance the tension between these two positions, between these two facts the work and its author will each become, futures they understand themselves already to have. In that agony at a

standstill, from that mediated tension between melancholia and automatism, Adorno and the *Minima Moralia* screen for us a *radically* exilic picture of the real phoniness, the monster documentariness of all positive facts.

Let's put it another way still. The émigré's disposition to remain attached, for his value or sense of self, to the home he left but must recall; and to the new one, for a value he will make for himself according to patterns conformable to those he abandoned, assimilated to them, repeating them—these are the forms of the psychology of exile we see in Said's treatment of Adorno, and in Adorno's later comments on Kracauer, but which each, the Jewish exile from Europe and the Palestinian exile from Palestine, must surely have been reserving also for himself, for that commodity-value he had also become. In this theater a sort of double feature is playing: we see that Kracauer stands to Adorno, with regard to film, as Adorno does to Said with regard to music and with regard to the critic's efforts to understand the great movements of history. But this position, this stance, is, as we have seen, both divided and (as if in compensation) oversignified. Toward the older critic, the younger one stands as the exile does toward the lost homeland, which is the source of his value and the condition of his estrangement, and toward the new land in which these, a transported value and the estrangement on which it rests, become a new form of identity. Each, Kracauer for Adorno, Adorno for Said, is at the same time the lost home from which he is exiled, and the location at which he arrives, anew and bearing a different value. The exile, estranged, but understanding his intellectual value to derive now, reciprocally, from his willingness and ability to estrange from itself the land, or the conceptual program, economy, or affective dispositions he now finds himself in. We have seen how Adorno's monsters are never one, but pass always through the messy sociality of the cinema, of the philosophy textbook, of the field of literature, of the sidewalk before the movie house. In the monster documentary that *Minima Moralia* screen for us, the psychology of exile is similarly determined and overdetermined by the dynamics of economic value and by the lexicon of disciplinary authority and competence—each of which passes through the others as well, determined and overdetermined each by the others: the condition of exile is an object or a token named, valued, traded, and exchanged in the three domains (in the three markets). This is why Kracauer is as much a figure of ambivalence for Adorno as Adorno is for Said.[27] Kracauer walks onto Adorno's late writings as the occasion of the comment, made in the 1964 essay "Der wunderliche Realist," that "One looks in vain in the storehouses of Kracauer's intellectual motifs for indignation about reification"—and the none-too-veiled suggestion is that this lack of indignation reveals an otherwise masked positivism, Kracauer's

understanding of an audience's relation to filmic objects taken to be what Hegel refers to, in the passage I cited from the *Phenomenology,* as the "immediate relation" of "substance holding its moments together."[28] But Kracauer is *also* the occasion for the almost simultaneous recognition, in Adorno's *Die Zeit* article of November 18, 1966, that became "Transparencies on Film," that the search for such "indignation" obscures something about films, and something genuinely novel about Kracauer's method and about his understanding of filmic objects, that exceeds Kracauer's infantile efforts to redeem those objects by understanding them as immediate facts in a visual field. In "Transparencies on Film," Adorno no longer seeks to find "indignation" at reification, at the objectality of films and their technique. Now, Kracauer's argument no longer represents for Adorno an infantile attachment to objects, and no longer purports to supply an immediate relation to the positive reality of the medium; Kracauer's method is no longer a search for the redemption of the object as a mere fact of experience or immediate given in the field of vision. That, one might justly suggest, was a description that mapped the melancholia, the nostalgia of exile upon the field of vision; to seek to redeem the bare object in the filmic medium, that real of the visual field, was to be prey to an infantile nostalgia for the lost homeland from which one had been expelled, the homeland of positive facticity, of naked and immediate objectality. The American Adorno would understandably have recognized that map for what it was, and rejected it—as he does in the movie house in *Minima Moralia*. In later years, however—at the time he is writing both "Der wunderliche Realist" and "Transparencies on Film"—Adorno finds that the "really phony" objects that Kracauer seemed to wish to redeem work to produce quite a different vision of exile and home as well, of the real object and the filmic object. "That which is irreducible about the objects in film," Adorno startlingly writes in 1966, "is itself a mark of society." The qualifier "in film" is crucial: it is Adorno's way of acknowledging the status of an object that is both "real," *qua* object; and "phony," inasmuch as it is an object in a film. From his second exile, his exile at home from his exile in America, now exiled from the "plaster cast" he had assumed on American soil, Adorno reserves for the irreducible objectality of objects in film *both* the creation of a nostalgic attachment to "real" objects *and* the "mark of society."

This is also the mark, and the condition, that he reserves finally for the exile that he at last becomes, estranged from that commodity-value he now understands his work, and himself, to have become for others' uses. Let's call this a form of radical exile, or perhaps better, of wild exile. Like the wild exile and like the condition of radical exile, films' objects now bear

irreducibly the social mark that makes them "really phony": the unending automatism, the rhythmic physics of loss and incommensurable gain, formed between the domains of self (the psychology of exile), economy, and cultural and professional authority among which bodies, objects, or tokens like "exile," travel, not so much unhoused as never at home.

6. Uncountable Matters

> We must assign to the symbol *o* such an interpretation that the class represented by *oy* may be identical with the class represented by *o*, whatever the class *y* may be. A little consideration will show that this condition is satisfied if the symbol *o* represent Nothing. In accordance with a previous definition, we may term Nothing a class. In fact, Nothing and Universe are the two limits of class extension, for they are the limits of the possible interpretations of general names, none of which can relate to fewer individuals than are comprised in Nothing, or to more than are comprised in the Universe. Now whatever the class *y* may be, the individuals which are common to it and to the class "Nothing" are identical with those comprised in the class "Nothing," for they are none. . . . The class represented by *1* must be "the Universe," since this is the only class in which are found all the individuals that exist in any class. Hence the respective interpretations of the symbols *o* and *1* in the system of Logic are Nothing and Universe. . . . As with the idea of any class of objects as "men," there is suggested to the mind the idea of the contrary class of beings which are not men; and as the whole Universe is made up of these two classes together, since of every individual which it comprehends we may affirm either that it is a man, or that it is not a man, it becomes important to inquire how such contrary names are to be expressed.
>
> —George Boole, *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought*, London, 1854

> I go through houses,
> streets,
> in elevators,
> touching things,
> spying objects
> I secretly covet
>
> —Pablo Neruda, "Oda a las Cosas"

Matter, *materia,* object, thing. I'm now coming at "matter," at "objects," and at "things" from a position of deep dissatisfaction with the way the terms are used when, synonymously or just hand in hand, they are made proxies for nonhuman agency, whether in the form of a vibrant "vitality [of] nonhuman bodies, forces, and forms," as Jane Bennett famously put it; or as a speculative

alternative to what Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman deplore as a "general anti-realist trend . . . in continental philosophy." This trend, they continue, "has manifested itself . . . especially through preoccupation with such issues as death and finitude, an aversion to science, a focus on language, culture, and subjectivity to the detriment of material factors, an anthropocentric stance towards nature, a relinquishing of the search for absolutes, and an acquiescence to the specific conditions of our historical thrownness [as well as a] lack of genuine and effective political action in continental philosophy—arguably a result of the 'cultural' turn taken by Marxism, and the increased focus on textual and ideological critique at the expense of the economic realm."[1]

Speculative realism in Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman's vein, and what Bennett calls "a careful course of anthropomorphization," announce the return of humanism in "nonhuman" form: as objective matter.[2] (Hyperobjective, Timothy Morton will say.[3]) Both "anthropomorphization" and the companion demand that we embrace speculative, *post*-anthropocentric thought make all things ours inasmuch as they are material, our kin, our proxy. Whatever-things and all-things bear our species its redemption inasmuch as all things are now agents, bearers of rights, entities to which and for which we are responsible, big-o Others. Levi Bryant, writing about the notion of "object" rather than "matter," puts it like this: "The claim that all objects equally exist is the claim that no object can be treated as constructed by another object" (19). The line linking the new materialism with different forms of environmental activism is drawn here. But at a cost. (The cost is apparent in the strain in Bryant's phrase: of course some objects *can be* "treated" as "constructed by another object." A chair, for instance, or any commodity, *can be* treated as "constructed" and produced by another "object," call it, him or her, a "laborer"; an expression like "all objects exist equally" *can be* treated as "constructed," that is, as given form, by another "object," call it, him or her, a philosopher seeking to "think the being of objects unshackled from the gaze of humans in their being-for-themselves." Indeed certain objects, commodities, and thoughts for instance, *should be* treated in this way: if they are not, then we risk naturalizing conditions of social and economic exploitation, or granting propositions even about, say, immaterial or nonexistent, Meinongian objects the status of existing natural objects. The *should* here is ethical as well as taxonomic. What is at issue is not *how* whatever-objects, material or not, *can be* "treated," but why, under what circumstances, to what ends, and with what consequences for such objects and for other like and unlike objects, whatever-objects are and have been "treated." To "treat" an object, material or not, in one or another way, is to "construct" it; to

consider it as the bearer of a being other-than-for-my-constructing it, and to make that ontological condition general, is to construct the field of objects as such. Bryant's "democracy of objects" *is* a "constructed" "object." As we shall see, it may even be, on the account of New Materialisms, a *material* object.) The story now goes that we humans have been guilty for too long of ignoring whatever-other material things, whatever-other objects, out of a narcissistic anthropocentrism that we are just now beginning to escape. Vibrantly living, material things decenter our world; we are grateful to them, ethically as well as scientifically; and that gratitude to the inhuman other, to the material other, becomes the mark of our species' progress—progress out of the solitude of our self-imposed primary narcissism, into a world in which we recognize at last that all-things and whatever-other-things act or in-sist other than for us, and in doing so bring us into a proper, adult relation to a world without us. On this description, the new materialism is another name for species heroism: the abjection of the human in the face of the world's materiality is now, at last, a proper attribute of the human, a properly scientific attitude, the core too of "genuine and effective political action." The more objective the world of matter, the more our wounded subjectivity can find comfort in this new, enlightened marginality, which we share with every-other being and with every other material thing. A world of margins. We are, at last, one thing counted among many, another whatever-thing: with this important singularity, that our species' greatest achievement, the mark of its difference from every-other-thing, is that we achieve the recognition of our horizontal relation to every-other-thing after a millennial struggle to rid ourselves of what Kant called our "self-imposed immaturity" (*selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit*)—the immaturity of imagining that things in the world answer to us.[4]

Hence my mistrust of, and my irritation with, the uses to which "matter," "things," and "objects" are put today. I cannot escape the sense that the concept of "matter" (which I'll use, for now, as a shorthand for the triad of "matter," "object," and "thing" that I'll be unbraiding in the course of this chapter), as we handle it now and despite its strategic advantages in the ethical and (perhaps) in the political domains, is another tactic for demonstrating our enlightenment: new "matter," new "objects," new "things" fashion the world to our advantage in the very gesture of abjecting us.[5] They commit us to the humanism of masochists; their "effective politics" is empathy. *This* "matter" offers as an alternative to Continental philosophy's fall into mediation, critique, textuality, and culture, an animistic and paradisiacal "realm" of immediate transactions *inter alia* as *inter pares,* human to human, human to and with nonhuman, face to face, world without end, as it was once before

we pointed to something, some matter, that was-not-yet object as such and named it thus and so. Neruda wonderfully writes that he loves "all things," "todas las cosas," and he means "los botones, las ruedas, los pequeños tesoros olvidados, los abanicos en cuyos plumajes desvaneció el amor sus azahares, las copas, los cuchillos, las tijeras," that is, all fabricated things, "buttons, wheels, little forgotten treasures, fans in whose feathers love faintingly dissolved its perfumes, cups, knives, scissors," but he *also* means "este océano," this ocean which is yours, *tuyo,* and which like all fabricated things bears "en el mango, en el contorno, la huella de unos dedos, de una remota mano perdida en lo más olvidado del olvido" (in its handle and in its outline the print of fingers, of a distant hand lost in the farthest of forgetfulness).[6] The hand of the maker, or the hand of the poet, or your hand: his "Oda a las cosas" is one "cosa" among others, bearing witness to all the things the poet could ever hope to enumerate, even the ones his lists forget to tell. I am sympathetic to the impulse, and I think it's tactically and strategically invaluable, as the catastrophic consequences of human exploitation of the environment are becoming clearer every moment. But "matter" will not help us, politically or ethically, if it is just ours, if we fashion it, the made thing or the oceanic, natural thing, so that it bears somewhere, in its concept or "en lo más olvidado del olvido," the signature of a human hand in its making. Can we do otherwise?

Not if we imagine "matter" to be the sort of thing that was once indicated by "una remota mano perdida," or if we take the term "matter" to mean something like "the substance of an object," or "what a single thing is made of," that is, not if "matter" is a concept ("the substance of an object" or "what a single thing is made of") that you and I can designate by pointing at it, with my words or yours (as when I say, "este océano . . . el tuyo") or with my hand or with your fingers. Take the account we find in the useful and important collection that Diana Coole and Samantha Frost edited in 2010, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics.*[7] Coole and Frost's introduction does not, it seems to me, provide a philosophically satisfactory definition of the term "matter." The authors correctly note the difficulty, which on their telling resembles a bit the impasse I just described—the seemingly inevitable masochistic heroics that the human animal embraces when it finally, laboriously, achieves equality with every-other-thing. It seems, Coole and Frost write, that anytime we talk about "matter," and even more when we try to define "matter," we get caught up in just what isn't material, that is, in the lofty world of concepts and ideas—for instance, the idea of matter, the concept of matter, and so on. And yet we insist. Now this version of what Quentin Meillassoux calls "correlationism" is not in itself disabling, and it is

not invulnerable—it can be criticized, as Meillassoux does, on other grounds than its Enlightened heroics.[8] There is no logical requirement—quite the contrary, it would seem—that concepts possess the attributes of the entities of which they are the concept: the concept of "horse" does not gallop; the concept of "hand" does not grasp. (At least it does not grasp in English. You'll get a sense of the complication of the question when I pass my example over into German, where the word for concept, *Begriff,* does indeed grasp or grip, *greifen, begreifen*.) As for the small class of concepts that *do* seem to be identical with the entities of which they are concepts, or at least to share in their phenomenal qualities, expressions regarding this identity or these shared properties turn out to be almost without exception tautological. The concept "a mental representation" is a mental representation (it is also other things); more sloppily, the concept "a thought" is also a thought. But listing these cases and almost all others like them amounts to arguing that concepts like "mental representations" and "thoughts" are examples of themselves—and this is unproblematical: we've merely drawn a little distinction between concepts like "horse" or "hand" that share no or very few qualities with the entities of which they are the concepts, and others, like "mental representation" or "thought," which do, or which share just enough qualities to be considered *cases* or *examples* of themselves.

This is not, however, the sense in which the concepts of "matter," "materiality" and "materialization" are pressed by these New Materialisms. The claim is broader. "New materialist ontologies," write Coole and Frost, "are abandoning the terminology of matter as an inert substance subject to predictable causal forces. According to the new materialisms," they continue,

> if everything is material inasmuch as it is composed of physicochemical processes, nothing is reducible to such processes, at least as conventionally understood. For materiality is always something more than "mere" matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable. In sum, new materialists are rediscovering a materiality that materializes, evincing immanent modes of self-transformation that compel us to think of causation in far more complex terms; to recognize that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces and to consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency.[9]

Materiality, that excess or supplement of "force, vitality, relationality, or difference," *acts* in a way that is forbidden to classic conceptions of matter—Aristotelian *hyle*, inanimate or passive matter, matter in its persistent relation of subordination to terms like "idea," "form," "spirit," "man," and of similarity or even synonymy with terms like "substance," "element," "essence," "life,"

"object," "woman," and so on. Today's "matter," infused with the supplemental vitality of materiality, acts to *materialize*—that is, to disclose the relational, contingent aspect of an object's being, and also, because "disclosing" is an act carried out in this material world by the supplemental materiality of the physical object—also to produce material effects beyond the epistemological, even epistemophilic satisfaction we might draw in recognizing that this or that physical object or this or that phenomenon is to be understood in relation to "a multitude of interlocking systems and forces." And note: this "acting" obtains not *just* with regard to this or that physical object or phenomenon, but to "everything," inasmuch as "everything . . . is composed of physicochemical processes." Yes, "everything"—everything, including what are not classically understood to be physical objects at all, say mental representations, Aristotelian *phantasmata,* and of course concepts, including the concept of "matter," which, being part of "everything," must also be composed of such processes.

Even with its commendable hedge ("*if* everything is material inasmuch as it is composed of physicochemical processes, *nothing is reducible to* such processes") the argument is too strong: *everything?* And "nothing"? We'll hold up a hand and say, wait. Terms like "everything" and "nothing" seem intuitively mismatched to an argument concerning the open list of whatever-things. (Unless a thing inasmuch as it is one *is necessarily* "composed of physicochemical processes": here, using limiting terms like "everything" and "nothing" will make sense. But now we will have driven a classically *idealist* stake in the ground, and anchored our argument in logical necessity and not on our attention to whatever we may encounter in the world; that is, not on attention to whatever-might-be, to the modality of the possible—including the possibility that there are as-yet-undiscovered "things" composed of other-than-physicochemical processes. These things, which we cannot perhaps imagine but can refer to, as I am doing now, cannot be counted alongside "material" things "composed of physicochemical processes"; if they exist, and even if they exist only as the imaginary objects this small argument is referring to, they will and will not be part of both "everything" and "nothing.") Claims made so sweepingly—"everything," "nothing"—at core beg the question, and turn out to be other than "materialist" by any definition.

Set aside this intuitive objection, though; grant the point. It's conceivable that a concept I imagine or reason through, the concept of "horse" or of "matter," has a sort of physicochemical existence, and that we will one day use physical and chemical markers to register and map its location and effectivity, to use an Althusserian word, in the brain; and that we will one day exhaustively map the environment in which these concepts have small

or large, but eventually discernible, material effects. On that day we will register the effects of physicochemically locatable concepts using massive data-collecting techniques and data compiling and analyzing algorithms unthinkable a generation ago. Both eventualities are conceivable, even likely, given advances in neural imaging techniques, technologies like functional MRIs, and the extension of data mining to social domains and experiences previously thought to be unquantifiable, on the back of social networking and other forms of capture. These technical eventualities are likely, but it would be a category mistake to *identify* those physicochemical markers, those real-world effects or materializations, and that mode-of-being in my brain or mind of the concept, *with* the concept. When I say the word "horse," and thereby refer to the concept "horse," I am doing something quite different from referring to the physicochemical markers that, we might agree, indicate the location, effectivity, even the composition of "horse" in my physical brain. "Matter" may have a latent physicochemical existence in my brain, and my saying the word "matter" may light up a predictable network there or in your brain, and my mention of that word may put me in an instant in relation to any number of other users of the term—but the relation between my saying, thinking, or typing "matter" and those effects, that is, the action in the material world of my saying "matter" and the brain's physicochemical response to that stimulus, is not itself in the same way *part of* the concept "matter" (since this process describes the general physicochemical mode-of-being of *all* concepts-in-the-brain). The holistic claim that "everything," including the concept of "matter," "is composed of physicochemical processes" just asserts that "everything" and "matter" are identical inasmuch as "matter," with its supplement of "materiality," has now materialized everything, everywhere, always. *Everything* is matter (plus "materiality"); and *nothing* is not matter (plus "materiality"). Just as the "human," deposed from its Ptolemaic perch at the heart and center of things, rebuilds and protects itself by means of Enlightened heroism, becoming a material thing counted among material things but also different from all other material things in having *achieved* or *wrought* that condition; so too is "matter" a concept counted among others, a material thing among others, *and also* the name of the quality shared by *all* concepts, by "everything," inasmuch as "everything . . . is composed of physicochemical processes."

This is one reason, let's call it a formal reason, why humanism returns for the New Materialism in "nonhuman" form as matter: the concepts share a singular topology. The "human" and "matter" are things that count like any other material thing; *and* they contain multitudes; they furnish the concept of what counts. They are *part* of "everything"; they are the condition on which anything whatsoever, whatever-thing, can be counted as part of everything.

This is a complicated position. I'm going to characterize it, for reasons I'll get to shortly, as a sort of vulgar fetishism, or better, as *theological* fetishism. Even Meillassoux's searching critique of correlationism, by far the most careful and consequential critique of vulgar idealism and vulgar materialism before us today, stands upon a form of theology.

Theological. Here is another thing, not found in Neruda's catalog of fabricated or natural things—"los botones, las ruedas, los pequeños tesoros olvidados, los abanicos en cuyos plumajes desvaneció el amor sus azahares, las copas, los cuchillos, las tijeras," the ocean. Like Neruda's "Oda a las cosas," it's both the sort of thing I can handle (in different media), point to and refer to, *and also* a representation of just such things. Are such amphibological objects—poems counting as material objects that also *represent* such things—exceptional, or can they stand for the entire class of material things we find ourselves in?

It's now some time shortly before the year 1601. John Donne writes his poem "The Relic," imagining a time when his "grave is broke up again" by someone who will find "A bracelet of bright hair about the bone," the relic of a forgotten love, still brilliant, but requiring the gloss of "this paper," that is, the poem that accompanies, but also offers us and supports, the bright *O* formed by the ring of hair.[10] One sort of materialist will ask these questions: under what conditions, to what ends, with what resources was the poem written? Where was the ink bought, what hand cut and trimmed the quill, who read, proofed, set, and printed the manuscript? How was it read, who could read, what was the physical composition of the thing, how was it held, what hands grasped it, what eyes read it? How did it circulate? My materialist will ask: what was the status of relics at the end of Elizabeth's reign? What conception of miraculous property does the relic convey? To whom, to what communities, religious, economic, political? Another sort of materialist will ask: under what conditions is the poem to be read *today*? What conception of literary value is displayed by the choice of that poem—for instance, as an example offered in a book chapter, or in a lecture hall in Palo Alto or a classroom in New York? Who is excluded, who is included, in the notional classroom or lecture hall by means of this poem? How is it anthologized today; in what medium—electronic, print—does it circulate; on what platform is it read; at what cost to the environment, or at what social cost, is that platform produced; what technologies of search, indexing, and reference support "The Relic" *today*? At the crossing of what networks does this poem-thing stand?

We need not decide among these notional materialists. We need not bring order and taxonomy to the different sorts of matter, and to the different procedures for addressing it, that my materialists handle. We need not

account for the materializing effects that these different material things have at the hands of my different materialists. Let's just record them here: they're brought together for the nonce by this thing, this poem that I imagine them to be handling. What concerns me now is different.

Let's return to the poem. Of course, just what "the poem" *is* is precisely what my little crowd of academic materialists has been putting in doubt—so we may be getting ahead of ourselves even here, even when we say we're just breaking the grave of the poem open again, just returning to it. Bear that in mind. Just who "I" and "she" were, the lovers the poem describes; what story in specific the golden letter, or the golden cipher that surrounds the bone does tell—these have fallen away, like flesh from bones, like every physical attribute the bodies that loved once might have possessed. The relic, shorn of the poem that explains its virtues and tells in small the story of the two lovers, is a pure token. A pronoun, an index: "my," "he," "there," "this device," "this grave," "this event," "that age by this paper taught." The lyric conventionally turns on such indices: their function is not to specify that yes, here, *this* occurred, to *such-and-such* a person, under *these* conditions—and to no other, at no other time, no place else. Rather, the lyrical index provides a means by which another, any other, all others, may assume the shape of this "I," at some other "now" and at a different "there," and discover proxies in the poem, as one grave-breaker years from Donne's writing discovers in the writer's grave a relic or an example for his or her own life and loves.

All sorts of difficulties beset us immediately. The poem moves from one indexical expression to the next, but with increasing difficulty—and with the last, wonderfully sad verses, it reaches a point of near incoherence: "These miracles we did," the poet writes, "but now, alas,/All measure and all language I should pass,/Should I tell what a miracle she was." Telling, "now," the "miracles" that the lovers did "then" seems possible—it's what the poet has just been doing. But if the poet "should tell," by chance or by design, "what a miracle" his beloved "was," then he will have miraculously "passed" what language and measure can tell—where the mathematical and narratological senses of "telling," a word that means both "counting" and "recounting," are shown to share a common limit. What began as a collective expression, "will he not let *us* alone," an "us" expressing a cozy commonality of time and experience, the shared luck of the grave—is now irremediably split: "I" cannot tell "what a miracle she *was.*" Her time and mine no longer beat together; she is dead, already dead, dead to the time of my own death, from which I write; and that "we" we shared in my first lines appears to me now past all measure and all language, a sort of miracle or a sort of fantasy, something, alas, that I cannot count on telling. In time to this splitting up of the poem's time, "The

Relic" envisions not one conventional form of indexical expression but two contradictory ones. Recall that the writer offers his readers not one, but two grave-breakers, each with a different disposition toward the objects he finds. The first grave-breaker spies the "bracelet of bright hair" and charitably lets it and the bone it circles alone, to serve as a "device" marking where two souls may meet: a private token, an index working precisely and only to the extent that it designates *this* spot and no other, where you and I have called our souls to meet "at the last busy day." But the *second* grave-breaker, who opens the grave "in a time, or land, where mis-devotion doth command," will move the bones and bracelet of hair from the tomb to the court or to the church where bishop and king reside, and "make them relics," and press them into universal service as bearers of miraculous properties adored by "all women" and "some men." The time of "mis-devotion" sets the object into circulation, adds to it a public surplus-value (relics, for Protestant and especially for post-Tridentine Catholicism, are miraculous objects), and requires the supplementary relic that is the poem to tell the story that the bones and the bracelet of hair will otherwise lose, as bones lose flesh, as golden hair loses its color.[11] The poet-as-hagiographer is born when the poem's object loosens its bond to the quiet place where it once lay, loses its *this*-ness, its *here*-ness, its pertinence to *me* in particular, loses what the materialist tradition has called, following William of Ockham, its *haecceity*—and steps forth into courts, churches, and into social use.[12]

As I'm telling its story, then, the poem "The Relic" tells its readers, some of its readers, how a thing can be at once measurable and narratable, and not. It describes, even defines, the unpredictable, "miraculous" ontology of things understood as haecceities; of every *this*-thing's countability and uncountability. This story is told, and this peculiar ontology is defined, in the poem's treatment of indication, in its treatment of time, and in its characterization of the two grave-breaking proxies for readers and interpreters. In this way the poem seeks to define what sort of thing its reader is or can be as well: what sort of subjectivity, if you will, will correspond to the mixed ontology of the poem's object? The first grave-breaker, the first proxy for the reader, my first materialist, recall, simply lets the poem's relics lie as markers or indices of some future meeting spot and meeting time where separated souls will reassemble; the second grave-breaker, my second proxy reader, my second materialist, remember, plucks the object from the place that it holds and indicates, and then gives it or discerns in it devotional value in order to set it into circulation in the present moment, where the relic has the sorts of material effects we expect of such objects: miraculous cures, the foundation or protection of cities and empires, the inspiration of whole populations, and so on. Both

of my proxies count less upon my relics' physical qualities—the brightness or color of the hair about my bony wrist; the sturdy blankness of the bones it circles—than upon their insistence: they are tokens of whole and living bodies. Each relic stands alone, and each also, uncomfortably, even shockingly, represents the whole body of which it is a part—hence the jar we feel on the poem's use of the pronoun "us" to refer to the relics: "Will he not let us alone," the poem asks of our first proxy; "Then he that digs us up, will bring / Us to the Bishop and the King," it says of our second proxy. It is the relics', but also our, insistence as things that nakedly, abstractly bear a bare name, noun, or pronoun that both readers' proxies share. These things that speak for us (and as "us") in-sist *despite* their lack of material, physical properties. They in-sist *because* a story or a history attaches to us, to these relics. The grave-breaker that simply lets us lie and the one who sets us in motion as relics dispose of us as things shorn of qualities. For them, we are all measure, all language, that is, nothing but measure and nothing but language. But through them we are also the bare "miracle" of our material life, counted and recounted "now." The hagiographical poem that tells our supplementary, miraculous but flawed story also tells the story of these two seemingly irreconcilable dispositions toward the object—devotional both, but utterly different, except inasmuch as they both nakedly dispose of us. A poem that is not *one,* about an object that is not one, disposing its readers in contradictory ways.

I have been working my way around to a different way of understanding materialism than is provided in the holistic account of the "new materialisms" that I opened on. Through this highly tendentious reading of Donne's poem, I've found my way to a version of Meillassoux's position on correlationism, which maintains that material objects in-sist outside of the frame of human knowledge but are still *knowable,* inasmuch as they possess not only the properties that strike the eye and the senses—the brightness of the hair encircling my dead wrist, the lanky whiteness of the bones it encircles—but also what he refers to as primary properties. These are indisseverable properties of this or that thing: *mathematical* properties. The distinction is Scholastic, and sounds it. This "bracelet of bright hair" can be *told,* that is, it can be counted; it can be indicated or pointed to, not inasmuch as it is *bright,* or as it is composed of hair, or as it occupies this particular space in my tomb, by my side, encircling me here and now; but inasmuch as it exhibits the blank qualities "that can," as Meillassoux writes in *After Finitude,* "give rise to a mathematical thought (to a formula or a digitalization) rather than to a perception or sensation." These qualities, he says, "can be meaningfully turned into properties of the thing not only as it is with me, but also as it is without me." Elsewhere, Meillassoux gives a proper name to the procedure of thought indicated by the expression

"can be meaningfully turned into" these primary properties: *absolutization,* the absolutization of (the) one.

I am working on two levels. On one hand, I have been describing the poem's representation of the relic: untellable because rife, on my description, with figurative incompatibilities, temporal incoherences, and narratological contradictions. On the other hand, I have been referring to the poem's self-presentation *as a relic,* an object persisting after the moment of its writing and publication, thus always bearing witness to what ineluctably *precedes* its appearing; an object holding together the incompatibilities I've just enumerated. Whatever incoherences, contradictions and incompatibilities are predicable of the relic that the poem *represents* pertain to the poem itself on the condition that "the poem" be the one object of which these are predicable. This double circumstance, the ante-predicative condition of "being-the-one-object" and the condition of bearing-witness-to-what precedes it, is what Meillassoux will term a primary or a mathematical property, and the procedure by means of which we arrive at it is what he calls "absolutization." We might say, in brief, that the ways I've listed in which "The Relic" is not-one are *secondary* to an absolute mathematical property: whether it is with me or without me, for one sort of materialist reader or another, indeed in all possible worlds, "The Relic" is the proper name of whatever-thing has the quality of being both one and not-one.

The *proper* name. Meillassoux's speculative critique of correlationism joins a mathematical hand here with Kripke's account of designation. (Proper names have no *meaning*; they are semantically empty; and it is on this condition that they designate, as Kripke says, "in all possible worlds," that is, mathematically.) This is how Meillassoux describes "absolutization." He is describing what he calls "the problem of ancestrality."

> To solve this problem, we are not required to confer absolute value on what is traditionally labeled as secondary qualities—i.e. qualitative perceptions and affectations, whose existence we would be hard-pressed to assert prior to the existence of terrestrial life. However, we are required to establish the absolute scope of mathematical descriptions of reality, through which we reconstitute, by thought, that which pre-dates us. And so we'll see that this question passes through the question of the absolutization of unity, which I believe is at the source of the discourse of mathematics itself—the unity of the sign, and in particular of the sign devoid of meaning. [Et je crois que cette question en passe, comme on le verra, par une absolutisation de l'unité qui est à la source, à mon sens, du discours mathématique lui-même: l'unité du signe, et plus spécialement du signe dépourvu de sens.][13]

Tellingly, Meillassoux's example of the "sign devoid of meaning," *dépourvu de sens,* involves the "fable" of an archaeologist who comes upon an unintelligible, repeated mark—in Meillassoux's story, a hash-mark (#)—that could, he says, either form a frieze (to be seized, accordingly, as a complete object or as part of a complete object, according to an aesthetic judgment regarding ontically, empirically occurring marks) or be part of a set of identical marks, possibly endless (identity not judged ontically or empirically, but absolutely).[14] "The question," Meillassoux writes, is "what shift in understanding occurred in our archeologist when she successively grasped—in one and the same pattern—the decorative motif of a frieze, followed by the recurrent production of the self-same sign?" Passing from the former judgment (this mark is or could be a frieze, or part of one) to the latter (and back, as happens in Meillassoux's story) means attending to the mark apart from its spatial or temporal qualities, and on condition that it be devoid of meaning: attending to its unity and its reiterability.[15] (The critique of Derrida's account of the differing-deferring structure of the written mark is not explicit, but it is unmistakable.)

It is crucial to Meillassoux's argument that the archaeologist's two dispositions be distinct, as my two readings of Donne's poem are: the mark is part of, or constitutes, a frieze; the mark insist in-itself, a singularity identically iterable ad infinitum. The relic we encounter in Donne's poem; Donne's poem "The Relic." The mark #-as-frieze; #-as-ontologically-singular, meaning-devoid mark. In both cases the distinction is drawn chronologically. Meillassoux's "fable" extends into narrative time these two frames for the object, and the two sorts of judgments these frames make meaningful, as did I on first reading Donne's poem. Our fable, Meillassoux's and mine, now has a recognizable shape—it is the story of a transumption, of flesh *becoming* spirit; the *representation* of the relic becoming the proper name holding together, in ghostly coherence, the poem's incoherent representation of the particular relics' attributes, narrators, readers. Donne's poem, on my telling, recounts the story of how matter becomes transumed and transformed into an object—into a numerically singular, abstractable, and proper name: "The Relic." It would seem, too, that Meillassoux's "fable" reintroduces or retains, embodied in the successive experiences of the imagined, imaginary protagonist of his fable, the ontic, spatio-temporal considerations excluded from its account of the mathematical properties to which the "absolutizing" philosopher attends. Hence the symptomatic slide we find in Meillassoux's argument: his important essay "Contingence et absolutisation de l'un" envisions, as if the terms were synonymous, the absolutization of the "one" (*de l'un*), of the unit (*de l'unité*), and of unity (*de l'unité*). (The syntactical and lexical

differences between the three terms are clearer in English than in French, which obscures the distinction between the senses of "unit" and "unity." A matter of translation: but surely such matters pertain, and their insistence in Meillassoux's argument, where the translation between the French *un* and *unité* is both felicitous and tendentious, suggests its kinship with the analytic dream of a spiritualized formal language purified of the bony objectness we find in natural languages.) What does this temporalization or narrativization of the (philosopher's, the archaeologist's, the poem's writer's and reader's, the everyday person's) encounter with the material object tell us? Can we imagine that encounter otherwise? Repressed or displaced or buried, the semantico-phenomenological content of the "sign devoid of meaning" insists. The "primacy" of primary qualities rests on bone.

Let me show you what I mean. Turn with me to Freud's essay of 1927 on "Fetishism." It is perhaps the most controversial, and surely among the most vilified, of modern accounts of "objects," their status, value, and construction. I will briefly remind you, with William Pietz and others, of the long history that links the word "fetishism" to the Portuguese colonial experience; I will mention, of course, its excessively well-known role in both psychoanalysis and political economy, and as the point of convergence of efforts to think together those two fields, as in the work of Jean-Joseph Goux, Marc Shell, and many others.[16] What interests me about Freud's essay is a point of incoherence that Freud does *not* transume: that does not follow the christological path of translating matter into object, flesh into spirit, or phenomenal mark into mark-devoid-of-sense. Freud's *thing* allows us to understand one way at least in which the distinction between primary and secondary qualities fails—and thus to detach thinking about matter (which is never *one*) from thinking about objects. My purpose, through Freud's essay, is then double. *First* to reverse the direction of Meillassoux's "fable," and of the story I have told regarding Donne's poem, and, at least heuristically, to show what happens when we do so: what happens when we untell that story; when objects become uncountable inasmuch as they are material. And *second,* to suggest that Freud de-narrativizes the fable of the emergence of the fetish-object in ways that may allow us to encounter and think through such matters unheroically, that is, from the vantage of the inhuman.

But first. Now it's sometime before 1927. Freud describes his analysis of "a number of men whose object-choice was dominated by a fetish."[17] The essay unfolds—as many of Freud's technical essays do—with a surprising degree of suspense. His reader is told from the start the solution to the aetiology of male fetishism, which in these cases reveals itself to Freud "so naturally" and seems to him so compelling (Sie ergab sich so ungezwungen

und erschien mir so zwingend, more properly, "it gave itself up, it surrendered or yielded itself") that he finds himself prepared to generalize his finding—though with a proper caveat, whose suspenseful unfolding is the subject of the essay: "When now I announce that the fetish is a substitute [*Ersatz*] for the penis, I shall certainly create disappointment; so I hasten to add that it is not a substitute for any chance penis, but for a particular and quite special penis [nicht . . . eines beliebigen, sondern eines bestimmten, ganz besonderen Penis]." There's much to be said about just this proposition, of course, and much has already been said about it. Remark for now the two directions in which we proceed: on one hand, we are invited into the fantasy of scientific disclosure—the fantasy that the explanation for this or that puzzling circumstance or state of affairs surrenders itself "naturally" (or "freely, easily, without constraint"). And on the other hand, as if to protect the professional identity of the analyst, as if to insist that no state of affairs spontaneously, "naturally," discloses an analytic truth without the intervention of technique, without the analyst or the scientist's long training, on the other hand we are told that the revelation of this spontaneous interpretation is sure to "disappoint." The analyst steps back from what gives itself immediately, naturally, about the circumstance or the state of affairs, and hastens to show how that unsatisfying revelation substitutes for another one, resembling it in many ways but different from it: a revelation to be sought, constructed, and revealed at some peril, but satisfying, perhaps entertaining, and certainly serving to legitimize the analytic procedures employed in its discovery or construction. The rest of the story is well known *as a story*. We arrive at a more satisfying, less disappointing conclusion when we understand that the little boy either actually or in his imagination has seen that *his mother* is not possessed of a penis. The thought terrifies him. She must once have had one, then lost it somehow, through some unutterable act of violence. And this is not any old penis, just *any* penis. If it could happen to her of all people, he thinks or feels, then surely it could happen to me; she is what I desire and who I desire, not inasmuch as she is anatomically different from me but because she is also what my father desires and the one who desires my father, as I do in both cases. Like him, she is my proxy, and this also means that what happens to her could happen to me. The sight (or the imagination) of what she does not have, the sight or imagination of her genitals terrifies, and forces me into disavowal. No, it can't be, it must still be there, I must have been mistaken, yes, look, there it is, over here, just there where it is not but where my eyes fall, and now all the anguish at the possible loss of my own and all the desire to possess my mother's penis fall upon it, where my eyes fall. The means of my disavowal, the "token [or the sign, *Zeichen*] of triumph

over the threat of castration," is the fetish that I settle on and love in place of the mother's missing penis.

We need not commit ourselves to the truth, falsehood, or fictionality of Freud's complicated account of the etiology of fetishism—its failings are legion, its resources too. And for my purposes right now I'll only have in mind hazily, without directly engaging, Lacan's important treatment of this essay, in Seminar 4, *The Object Relation*. Consider Freud's for now a story that concerns the constitution and safeguarding of disciplinary and professional identity. Or even more specifically: consider it a story about how a state of affairs *either* immediately discloses, *or* through technical analysis can be made to yield up, a mental object to which it corresponds: its concept, the token or the sign of disciplinary triumph over the circumstantial, bare presentation of states of affairs as contingent occurrences. The story, or the essay, now moves us in a different sense. We begin, as Freud does, from the observation of a fact or a circumstance or a state of affairs in the world—for instance, the accidental fact that this or that man has a particular attachment to a shine on a nose, or to secretly snipping women's hair on the metro; or to pumps he sees about him; the accidental discovery of a ring of bright hair in an opened tomb; and so on. The barest thought will lead us to see in these objects *Ersatz* versions of something the man fears to lose, and must then supplement—the penis, any penis insofar as it might in any way stand in for his own, or indeed, for any source of power or instance of virility for which the physical object can itself be a stand-in. ("In later life," Freud tellingly writes, "a grown man may perhaps experience a similar panic when the cry goes up that Throne and Altar are in danger"; remember Donne's line: "Then he that digs us up, will bring / Us to the Bishop and the King.") But we are dissatisfied. The answer gives itself too quickly; it bespeaks an excessively broad concept, or analogy's dangerously imperial drift. Isn't there a difference between our taking note of a circumstance, whatever-circumstance, and then passing on, through some means, to providing its concept—and thus conforming to a disciplinary identity; and the fetishist's disavowal of one particular circumstance, the mother's phantomatic castration, and his affective investment in one particular *Ersatz* or substitute? If what's in peril is any-phallus, and any *Ersatz* or symbolic phallus will do in its place, then my discipline cannot explain why this or that object in particular comes to your attention or to mine, why this one thing rather than another, why this object stands in this unique relation to you or to me, and not another object, and not to another. Where once Throne and Altar, Bishop and King, seemed in peril, and with them our sense of identity as subjects determined by our relation to the sovereign, whether secular or divine; now what stands in peril

is the identity, the subjectivity, conferred by a discipline apparently unable to account for the genesis and structure of its concepts, a discipline relegated *either* to the most naked nominalism, the mere indication that yes, here and now, something is happening without my being able to indicate what relation it bears to something else, to some other event or object, mental or physical; *or* to concluding that yes, this event that is occurring here or now is symbolic, as is that one that occurred or as is the object to hand—but without being able to derive from their relation the *concept* or the grounds of their similarity, without being able to know what it is that they symbolize or are jointly signs (*Zeichen*) of.

We are dissatisfied. Something more, something other must be at work, to explain *not only* the variation of objects invested with fetish-value by different men, in widely different circumstances: what we might call the contingency or accidentality of the fetish-value, of the subject and object of fetishistic value-investment; *but also* the generality, even the abstractness of the phenomenon, its insistence. Without this "something more," our own movement in thought from a particular circumstance or state of affairs *to* its concept will be arbitrary as well, our disciplinary identity contingent and reactionary. Hence Freud's hypothesis regarding the *necessary* qualities that form the kernel of the concept of the fetish; of the cause of its valuation; and of the dynamics of its production. Its origin lies in the absence, not of any-phallus, but just of one—a phallus that isn't one, a phallus that I imagine, and imagine only when I find it lacking, a phallus always necessarily correlated to its absence, one thing and nothing. Lacan puts it like this: "This is not a real phallus which, inasmuch as it is real, can be said to exist or not exist. Rather, it is a symbolic phallus, inasmuch as its nature is to present itself in the circuit of exchanges as absence, absence working as such. . . . For whatever can be transmitted in the symbolic exchange is always something which is as much absence as presence."[18] The difference between the "real phallus" and the "symbolic one" whose loss occasions the value-investment in the fetish is, minimally, that the "real phallus" can always only exist *or* not exist. The "symbolic phallus," however, insists in the subsequent circuit of symbolic exchanges, and can bear a relation to every-other-object, inasmuch as every object, event, or phenomenon can be a symbolic proxy for the "symbolic phallus," and can be *both* absence and presence; can both exist and not-exist. The point is obscured because Lacan is arguing two things at once about the distinction between the "real phallus" and the "symbolic" or *Ersatz* one whose perceived loss gives rise to the fetish. A "real phallus" can always and at every moment *either* exist or not: this is the condition of material entities, of really existing material entities, as it is of statements regarding such

entities—statements that can, in standard logics, never be other than either true *or* false. The "symbolic phallus" is not subject to the laws of identity or of noncontradiction, it would appear: it can, and does, always present itself as at once present and absent; insistently there, and always elsewhere. Indeed it is symbolic rather than real or material precisely inasmuch as it is always and at every moment *both* present and absent; and its description will require that we make statements formed in nonstandard logics that are not subject to the constraining principles of identity, noncontradiction, and sufficient reason.

This is indeed the thrust of Lacan's argument, but it is not quite what he says—and this symptomatic hesitation will guide me toward my conclusion. Rather than stand *only* upon the paradoxical ontology of a symbolic object that both is and is not, and can be present and absent in its structure and in its defective concept, Lacan argues that the "symbolic phallus" "is made to have this sort of fundamental alternating, which entails that having appeared in one spot, it disappears, and reappears in another" (Il est fait pour avoir cette sorte d'alternance fondamentale, qui fait qu'étant apparu en un point, il disparait, pour reparaître en un autre). This "fundamental alternating" poses no problem to the classic principles of identity or noncontradiction. "Alternation," the becoming-other, *alter,* of what is at one moment the same, and at another moment different, now here, *fort,* now there, *da,* makes no claim to a paradoxical ontology. The introduction of time or of temporality allows Lacan, as it does Meillassoux as well, as it did my account of Donne's poem, to maintain or install the *logical* integrity of the symbolic phallus (to absolutize the one): to rescue its one-ness, its unity, and its being-the-unit for mathematical ontology, from the wound he has opened in it. To rescue Freud's position, to *return to Freud* as one does to the symbolic center or to the disciplinary concept.

You see where I am going.

In the first place, I will rather violently make Freud out to be recounting a story he doesn't tell explicitly in this essay of 1927: the story of the production of disciplinary objects from an encounter with contingent facts, from accidental facts *from* which, *for* which, concepts must be derived. The analyst, like any scientist, moves from the observation of a local, bounded phenomenon, to providing a concept for its coherence, for its relation to other phenomena, and for its appearing. This or that phenomenon or event—for instance, my cracking open a grave to find a ring of bright hair surrounding a bone; or my manifesting an excessive attachment to an improper object, a gleam on the nose, a pump, a bit of hair that I cut off on the metro—then discloses a further phenomenon beyond what it is in its simple presentation to me: a phenomenon, an event, or an object that is at once singular and

related, by some forms of similitude, to other phenomena, events, objects. This symbolic object nests in every fetish, and in every particular disciplinary object: psychoanalysis, like any discipline, draws its coherence and its legitimacy from the coherence of its object, a logical, even mathematical coherence whose compensatory structure Lacan's "alternations," like Meillassoux's reintroduction of the ontico-phenomenological register in his account of "absolutization," most clearly shows.

In the second place, I will map the Freudian story of the fetish-character of disciplinary objects onto Meillassoux's argument that we should turn, for a strong answer to correlationism, to a material object's primary, rather than its secondary, qualities. We would now say: imagine that we seek to turn or to understand an event, an object, or a phenomenon into a properly disciplinary object. If we're to claim to possess knowledge concerning the object in itself, then our procedure will, on Meillassoux's account, be this: we will *absolutize* the mathematical qualities of the material object. We proceed from those qualities in events, objects, or phenomena that "give rise to a mathematical thought (to a formula or a digitalization) rather than to a perception or sensation," as Meillassoux put it. These "thoughts" then "can be meaningfully turned into properties of the thing not only as it is with me, but also as it is without me." Our first step, axiomatically maintained, will be what Meillassoux calls the "absolutization of the one, the unit, or of unity [de l'un, de l'unité]," the "source of mathematical discourse." The supervenient "thoughts" that can become properties of the thing even without me derive from this "absolutization" of the one. Objects-as-numerically-one, objects as units or as unity, obey the laws of identity and of noncontradiction, in the way, we might say, that no natural number can be simultaneously prime *and* divisible by a number other than itself; or odd *and* even, that is, divisible by two and not divisible by two; the quality of ordinality. We will say, with Meillassoux, that this or that event, phenomenon, or object falls under a concept, that is, that it can be thought and can become a disciplinary object, inasmuch as it is possessed of this primary quality: it is and counts as one event, phenomenon, or object; it is ordinal; it can be brought into relation to other such, also in possession of those primary qualities; inasmuch as it is *real,* it will "give rise to" a concept.

Remark the circle I'm drawing, the circle in which an object is defined as such by, and determined to be appropriate to, a discipline, which retroactively takes its coherence and its value, and derives its procedures for establishing what counts *as* an object of study, from that of its object. The logical circle in which the New Materialists, and Lacan and Meillassoux entangle themselves as they seek to set aside whatever it is about the object that we

can call matter takes the shape of a number that is, and is not, like one (it will have to be commensurable with every-other-number, with every one; it will have to be commensurable with the number "one"; and it will have to be incommensurable with every-other-number, and with the number "one"); that can and cannot be counted next to any number on a number line; possessed of some of the qualities of natural numbers, but utterly heterogeneous as well. Poised at the vertex of the number line, our bright *O*, the cipher shaped like "a bracelet of bright hair," is a number like any other and yet utterly unlike; some-thing, nothing. Incarnate, but ephemeral; spirit and matter. Our cipher lies there, marking a spot as a stone or a marker will do, to lead your soul to me after our bodies have parted. But like a tactile, contact relic set into circulation, this bright logical circle moves beyond this spot as well, materializing in networks that exceed us, undisciplined, beyond the reach of Throne and Altar. Can we absolutize the one, and not obscure the cipher that keeps it company? Zero is like one in *being* one number, and in occupying an ordered place in the set of natural numbers. Any phallus is like any other in respect of their being-one. A discipline will discern in, or it will produce, from undifferentiated matter, from the contingent giving-itself of what we can call matter, the event, phenomenon, or object. But our cipher is also unlike any other natural number. To bring the zero into the set of natural numbers is in some respects to crack open that set: in addition to the qualities of any-other number (ordinality, certain arithmetic properties), the cipher possesses singular properties that make it unlike any-other number, as the mother's phallus is radically singular (among other things, in being imaginable only in retrospect, after it has been disclosed to me as lost).

Let me close offering you Freud's alternative. It allows me to answer a question I posed earlier, the question whether the strange, amphibian quality of the two poems I have turned to, Neruda's "Oda a las cosas" and Donne's "The Relic," poems that are manifestly both objects to be handled and representations of objects, is exceptional, or can be extended to the class of objects—and with what consequences, if the latter. Freud diagnoses but will not accept the bright, reliquary circle on which New Materialism, speculative materialism, and Lacanian logical coherence stand. In the 1927 essay on "Fetishism," Freud defines the materiality of objects, events, and phenomena as their capacity to be uncountable, in being not-one. He does this by placing, at the core of his essay, an impasse he will not resolve. The substitute for the symbolic phallus has two contradictory ontologies, two contradictory aetiologies, and a logical structure inimical to the principles of identity and noncontradiction to which both Lacan and Meillassoux will turn.[19] The fetish, Freud says, is what the startled child's eyes or imagination

find at hand when, in fright, he turns away from the spectacle of his mother's castration: hence, more often than not, an item accidentally arranged in proximity to her genitalia, or an attribute of the organ. Hair, a garter, a stocking, a pump, an ankle—the classic closet of the fetishistic imagination. *What* it could be is circumstantial entirely—hence the variety of fetishes one finds, hence the lack of closure, we might say, of the possible range of objects that can become fetishes. Anything, inasmuch as it might fall within the field of vision of the frightened child, could stand in for the symbolic phallus whose absence he must supply: anything. Buttons, wheels, little forgotten treasures, fans in whose feathers love faintingly dissolved its perfumes, cups, knives, scissors. A poem about such things, a bit of this or that, a knife, a bone, a poem *about* a bit of hair encircling a bone. The only *necessary* relation each of these *Ersatz* objects has to any-other is vertical: their common status as triumpant tokens of the disavowed absence of the mother's *Ersatz* penis.

But this is not the end of the story. Freud concludes his essay, abruptly, with an assertion that cannot be made to square with this contingent objectification of the material. We have just paused upon the characteristically ambivalent attitude of the fetishist toward "the question of the castration of women." Freud brings us back to the *coupeur de nattes,* the "pervert who enjoys cutting the hair off females," as Strachey's disapproving, if not disgusted, note says. "In him," Freud writes, "the need to carry out the castration which he disavows has come to the front. His action contains in itself the two mutually incompatible assertions: 'the woman has still got a penis' and 'my father has castrated the woman'" (Seine Handlung vereinigt in sich die beiden miteinander unverträglichen Behauptungen: das Weib hat seinen Penis behalten, und der Vater hat das Weib kastriert). The essay "Fetishism," like this "action" of the *coupeur de nattes,* contains then two mutually incompatible assertions: the assertion that the fetish need in no way *resemble* the symbolic phallus, or the material object the child's gaze found lacking; but also the essay's concluding assertion that "the normal prototype of fetishes is a man's penis, just as the normal prototype of inferior organs is a woman's real small penis, the clitoris." Meillassoux, and Lacan, and my earlier reading of "The Relic," evaded this incompatibility by introducing time, in the form of narrative sequence or of a minimal chronological antecedence structuring the relation between "alternating" or successive moments (in a fable, an account, or in the story Donne's poem appears to tell regarding the setting-into-circulation of the relics its embodies and represents). Freud does not. Where Strachey and the standard French translation offer us the word "prototype," Freud writes, "das Normalvorbild des Fetisch ist der Penis des Mannes, wie das des minderwertigen Organs der reale kleine Penis des Weibes, die Klitoris."

A *Vorbild* is indeed, as the German of the 1598 Calepinus notes, a synonym of *archetypus,* a *type,* but Freud's German is richer—it allows us to hear in addition the word's connection to *Bild,* image, that Grimm's *Wörterbuch*, of 1838–63, roughly, associates with the semantic field "forma, imagine, ritratto," and which gives Freud's *Vorbild* a sense that prevails in aesthetics, in painting in particular, in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century: a sketch, a study for a finished work or painting.[20] *Vorbild* recalls, again through Grimm, *exemplum,* both *a* case of something, *and* the exemplar, the highest form of an object, event, or phenomenon; both a material instance, and the idea or the concept of the totality of material instances. The link to the theological register is explicit: *Vorbild* is used commonly, before but especially after Luther's translation of the Bible, for the example that God's words provide to humans: Christ's actions and his words are a *Vorbild,* and the particle *vor-* will no doubt have the powerful Augustinian sense of an event occurring in historical time (the incarnation), and outside of it (God is not a being-in-time): a unit, a cipher. In this context, the term "normal" that we find in *Normalvorbild* should be understood not just to represent a synonym for "commonplace" or "usual," but also to evoke the normative or norm-generating quality of the archetype. (We have not abandoned the theological register. Recall Milton, addressing the "spirit" from which he draws inspiration, in the first book of *Paradise Lost*: "And chiefly Thou O Spirit . . . / . . . Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first / Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread / Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss / And mad'st it pregnant." The phallic *Vorbild* inspirits all its proxies; every *Ersatz* obeys its brooding norm, its discipline: the phallic object's eternity consists in just that obedience.) On this description, norms, in particular disciplinary norms, are the effect or consequence of *Vorbild*: epistemopoetic, compensatory, life-bearing.

Recall that Donne's poem too seemed to offer two irreconcilable aspects, which then resolved themselves when we took "The Relic" as the proper name to which, in any possible world, secondary attributes attached. Our description may be correct as regards Donne, and it may line up well with Meillassoux's and Lacan's account of the mathematical unity of objects, but it is wrong to Freud's analysis of the aetiology of fetish-objects. For Freud has placed *Vorbild,* and with it the double scheme of theological time, on one side of a characterization of the object whose other side has no temporal quality. Between the two "mutually incompatible assertions" regarding the status, aetiology, and structure of the fetish-object, Freud offers no compromise, no disciplinary avenue, no fable, no bright circle to tell our story or our numbers into completion, no path toward an "absolutization of the one," or

of "unity." Nothing mediates between the two, nothing translates one into the other: they insist without alternating. The object is just that instance in which these two characterizations of matter insist. Freudian matter, like a thing I write an ode to, like that ode itself, absolutizes what is not-one: matter from which no discipline will normally, normatively, produce an object or take its concept; on which heroical abjection will founder; matter nonhuman in ways the human animal can neither designate, nor ever count.

What follows for us now, if I am right regarding Marx, regarding Freud, regarding New Materialism, regarding "matter," "things," and "objects"? Minimally, we will want to recognize, and reject, the species heroism that underlies the animism of object-oriented ontologies. We will want to recognize the bright circle in which we turn, subjects of disciplinary knowledge inasmuch as we face objects our disciplines give us, from which our disciplines take their shape and norms. We will want to recognize, and assume, that inhuman matter insists in us just where we count ourselves both as one thing among others and, covertly, as the measure of all things. We will recognize in the stories and fables we tell ourselves—the story of our emergence from the narcissistic immaturity of anthropocentrism; of our achieved abjection; of our enlightened openness to the world-without-us; of the novelty of our materialism; of the ancestral distances that separate us from our infancies—compensatory norms: brooding ghosts for our instruction, to be addressed, if never entirely exorcised. Whatever ethicopolitical disposition we seek to assume regarding the human animal's predatory relation to itself and its environment will answer to these conditions, or fail.

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I'd like to express my thanks as well to the scholars, colleagues, students, and friends who over the years held me to account while I worked out some of the ideas I've developed in this book. There are too many of you to list, but every page bears the trace of your exacting friendship. Thank you.

Early versions of some of these pages appeared as "On the Nature of Marx's Things," in *Lucretius and Modernity*, ed. Jacques Lezra and Liza Blake, 125–43 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); "The Primal Scenes of Political Theology," in *Political Theology and Early Modernity*, ed. Julia Lupton and Graham Hammill, 183–212 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); and "Adorno's Monsters," in *Escape to Life: German Intellectuals in New York: A Compendium on Exile after 1933*, ed. Eckart Goebel and Sigrid Weigel, 27–54 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012). An excerpt of Chapter 6 appeared as "Uncountable Matters," in Oxford Literary Review 39, no. 1 (2017).

Marx wrote that "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future." This book comes from my sons Gabe and Nat, and from Emilia, my West Coast daughter: they're the poetry of my time's future. And this book, which is theirs, is also dedicated to them.

Notes

Foreword

1. Louis Althusser, "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter," in *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings, 1978–1987*, ed. François Matheron and Oliver Corpet, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2006), 167.
2. Ibid., 188.
3. Ibid., 196.
4. Louis Althusser, "The Object of *Capital*," in Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Pierre Macherey, and Jacques Ranciére, *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2015), 343.
5. Althusser, "Underground Current," 197.

Introduction

1. Duncan McLeod, "Your Point of View at HSBC," December 29, 2007, http://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2007/altruism-or-consumerism-your-point-of-view-at-hsbc (accessed August 8, 2017).
2. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, vol. 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1887), 160.
3. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (1976; repr., London: Pelican, 1990), 287. The German is from Karl Marx, *Das Kapital,* vol. 1, *Der Produktionsprocess des Kapitals* (Hamburg: Meissner, 1867), 145.
4. My first epigraph is from T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1951), §54: "Der lange, kontemplative Blick jedoch, dem Menschen und Dinge erst sich entfalten, ist immer der, in dem der Drang zum Objekt gebrochen, reflektiert ist. Gewaltlose Betrachtung, von der alles Glück der Wahrheit kommt, ist gebunden daran, daß der Betrachtende nicht das Objekt sich einverleibt: Nähe an Distanz" (111–12). The translation is mine. I have consulted Jephcott's translation, in *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 89–90, as well as the preferred version available online, by Dennis Redmond: http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/MM2.html. The second epigraph is from John Horne Tooke, *Epea Pteroenta; or, The Diversions of Purley* (London: William Tegg, 1857), 608–9. Parts of this introduction were delivered as a talk at "Gegenstand der Kritik," a conference held in Berlin in June 2012, sponsored by DFG-Graduiertenkolleg Lebensformen + Lebenswissen, Stiftung-Europa-Universität Viadrina.
5. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Nicola Bradbury (London: Penguin, 2003), 56.
6. See Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22.

7. A useful review of the historical frame in which Marx's work takes up Hegel's thought in James D. White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

8. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1989): "Must we admit that from now on each form of positivity will have the 'philosophy' that suits it? Economics, that of a labour stamped with the sign of need, but with the eventual promise of the great reward of time? Biology, that of a life marked by the continuity that forms beings only in order to dissolve them again, and so finds itself emancipated from all the limitations of History? And the sciences of language a philosophy of cultures, of their relativity and their individual power of expression?" (304). Foucault's discussion of this "philosophy of cultures" that underlies the "form of positivity" called philology is directly the subject of chapter 8 of *The Order of Things,* 272–329. See Ian Hacking, "Night Thoughts on Philology," *History of the Present* 4 (1987): 3–10.

9. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Wir Philologen," in *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4.1, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), 107. The English translation is from Friedrich Nietzsche, "We Philologists," in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Complete Works,* vol. 8, ed. and trans. Oscar Levy (1909–11; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 112.

10. Nietzsche's passage is not itself antinomic, and it is not precisely circular—but still it invites readers to attend, with the ear of the philologist, to the rumor of paradox. Take the curiously wasteful, un-economical doubling of roughly synonymous verbs, *taxieren, abschätzen*. Now, the philologist will barely pause over the minimal difference between the Latinate *taxieren* and the Germanic *abschätzen*. Attentive to the treasure, *Schatz,* that these operating terms may hold in common, the philologist is taxed with assessing, on the basis of that attention, whether the primary "clarity" man experiences inasmuch as he is a man *is* an experience constitutive of his *life*. Our philologist will hear in *taxieren* the noun *Tax,* rooted in the Latin *taxare,* from the Greek *ταξι*, and there he or she will pause. With Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 1854–1961) and with the lexicographer Friedrich Kluge's *Etymologisches wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Strasburg: Trübner, 1883), our notional philologist will recall that *taxieren* touches on *tasten,* to touch, fumble, which shares with *taxieren* the sense of *taxitare* as "to touch sharply" (Grimm, Kluge: *scharf berühren*). He or she will hesitate, as the philologist Johann Philipp Krebs does in his widely popular *Antibarbarus der lateinischen Sprache* of 1837, over *taxieren*'s double sense—captured in the English distinction between "taxing," "assessing," but also "imposing," "ordaining," or "prescribing something" and "taxing," imposing the requirement to pay an assessed fee (*OED*). Nietzsche knew Krebs's *Antibarbarus* in its fourth edition of 1866. Cf. Christian J. Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 171n15. Johann Philip Krebs, *Antibarbus der lateinischen Sprache* (Frankfurt: Bronner, 1866), "*Taxare.*" Krebs writes:

> ist in den beiden Bedeutungen *tadeln* und *abschätzen* erst *N. Kl.*; *tadeln* wird *Kl.* durch *vituperare, reprehendere, perstringere, invehi in aliquem* ausgedrückt, und *abschätzen (anschlagen, taxiren,)* durch *aestimare,* sowie auch *die Abschätzung—aestimatio* heisst. Das freilich *taxare* in der zweiten Bedeut. schon früher üblich gewesen sein muss, zeigt das Subst. *taxatio,*

> welches bei Cicero (*Orat. pro Tullio* §7) vorkommt, wo es aber von *aestimatio* unterschieden wird; jedoch waren die Alten selbst über diesen Unterschied nicht einig. Vgl. die Ausleg. zu jener Stelle Cicero's in Beier's Ausgabe. *Taxare* ist also neben jenen andern in beiden Bedeutungen nicht zu verwerfen.

The revised entry in the 1866 edition expands the original (1837) entry, and continues: "Über *damnum taxare, einen Schaden schätzen,* vgl. *Damnum.—N.L.* aber und lächerlich ist es, in bildlicher Übertragung zu sagen: *taxare verborum probitatem et puritatem, die Aechtheit und Reinheit der Wörter taxiren.* Eben so wenig brauche man das N.L. *taxa, doe Taxe,* was durch *taxare, taxatio, aestimare, aestimatio* auszudrücken ist." Nietzsche uses *taxieren* generally in connection with commercial appraisals, making the connection to "taxation" explicit, as here:

> Grundgedanke einer Cultur der Handeltreibenden.—Man sieht jetzt mehrfach die Cultur einer Gesellschaft im Entstehen, für welche das Handeltreiben ebenso sehr die Seele ist, als der persönliche Wettkampf es für die älteren Griechen und als Krieg, Sieg und Recht es für die Römer waren. Der Handeltreibende versteht Alles zu taxiren, ohne es zu machen, und zwar zu taxiren nach dem Bedürfnisse der Consumenten, nicht nach seinem eigenen persönlichsten Bedürfnisse; "wer und wie Viele consumiren diess?" ist seine Frage der Fragen. Diesen Typus der Taxation wendet er nun instinctiv und immerwährend an: auf Alles, und so auch auf die Hervorbringungen der Künste und Wissenschaften, der Denker, Gelehrten, Künstler, Staatsmänner, der Völker und Parteien, der ganzen Zeitalter: er fragt bei Allem, was geschaffen wird, nach Angebot und Nachfrage, um für sich den Werth einer Sache festzusetzen. Diess zum Charakter einer ganzen Cultur gemacht, bis in's Unbegränzte und Feinste durchgedacht und allem Wollen und Können aufgeformt: das ist es, worauf ihr Menschen des nächsten Jahrhunderts stolz sein werdet: wenn die Propheten der handeltreibenden Classe Recht haben, dieses in euren Besitz zu geben! Aber ich habe wenig Glauben an diese Propheten. Credat Judaeus Apella—mit Horaz zu reden.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Morgenröthe: Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1887), §175 (165–66).

11. See Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Fred R. Myers, ed., *The Empire of Things* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 2001).

12. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109; but Latour's discussion of ways to broaden or generalize the "principle of symmetry," articulated for the field of sociology by David Bloor, is much older. See Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 91–97. For Bloor's "strong programme" for sociology, see his extraordinary *Knowledge and Social Imagery* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976).

13. Latour, *Reassembling the Social,* 75–76.

14. Daniel Miller, ed., *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3.

15. Alan Costall and Ole Drier, eds., *Doing Things with Things: The Design and Use of Everyday Objects* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006), 2.

16. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Romanticism and the Life of Things: Fossils, Totems, and

Images," in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown, 227–44 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 232.

17. Pici Mirandulensis, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/mirandola/oratio.shtml; my translation.

18. Roger Brown and Helen Carasso, *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

19. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 27.

20. Ibid., 22.

21. See Andrzej Warminski, "Hegel/Marx: Consciousness and Life," in *Yale French Studies* 88, *Depositions: Althusser, Balibar, Machey and the Labor of Reading*, special issue, ed. Jacques Lezra, 118–41 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).

22. M. Tullius Cicero, *For Milo*, in *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes,* ed. Albert C. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 53.

23. Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Pierre Macherey, and Jacques Rancière, *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition,* trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2015), 38–39. Althusser's expanded argument is worth citing at greater length:

> When empiricism designates the essence as the object of knowledge, it admits something important and denegates it in the same instant: it admits that the object of knowledge is not identical to the real object, since it declares that it is only a part of the real object. But it denegates what it has admitted, precisely by reducing this difference between two objects, the object of knowledge and the real object, to a mere distinction between the parts of a single object: the real object. In the admitted analysis, there are two distinct objects, the real object "which exists outside the subject, independent of the process of knowledge" (Marx) and the object of knowledge (the essence of the real object) which is quite clearly distinct from the real object. In the denegation, there is no longer more than *one object*: the real object. Hence we are within our rights in concluding that the true play on words has deceived us as to its site, its support (*Träger*), the word which is its ambiguous seat. The true play on words is not a play on the word "*real*," which is its mask, but on the word "*object*." It is not the word "*real*" which needs to be interrogated in connexion with the murder, but the word "*object*"; the *difference* of the *concept* of object must be produced to deliver it from the fraudulent unity of the *word* "object." (40)

For an important consideration of Althusser's seeming "object," the so-called "epistemological break" in Marx's works, see Étienne Balibar, "Althusser's Object," trans. Margaret Cohen and Bruce Robbins, *Social Text* 39 (1994): 157–88, esp. 178: "Althusser ended up clearly recognizing that he was doing philosophy in the sense that he, too, was constructing a 'philosophical object' (like the *cogito* or the *contract*). He recognized that the epistemological break was not so much *the concept of the object* (which would be the general process of 'theoretical production,' of the 'transformation of ideology' into its opposite, science) as the presentation *of the concept as object*."

24. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 2001), 175. The German: "Allein, das Entscheidende ist nun keineswegs die hier kurz erwähnte *Bedeutungsgeschichte* der Wörter *res, Ding, causa, cosa*

und *Chose*, *thing*, sondern etwas ganz anderes und bisher überhaupt noch nicht Bedacht es." Martin Heidegger, "Das Ding," in *Heidegger Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 1.7, *Vorträge und Aufsätze (1936–1953),* ed. F.-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000), 177.

25. Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm. Further developments of Lazzarato's concept, in Gerald Raunig, *A Thousand Machines,* trans. Aileen Derig (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010), and most pertinently to my work in *Necrophilology,* his *Dividuum: Machinic Capitalism and Molecular Revolution,* trans. Aileen Derig (South Pasadena, Calif.: Semiotexte, 2016). See also Nick Dyer-Witheford, "Cognitive Capitalism and the Contested Campus," in *Engineering Culture: On 'The Author as (Digital) Producer,*' ed. Geoff Cox (New York: Autonomedia, 2005), 71–94, and *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High Technology Capitalism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

26. I am aware of Latour's rather different use of the term "translation," in *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). Elsewhere, Latour acknowledges a debt to the work of Michel Serres and Michel Callon, especially Callon's "sociological" usage of the term in Callon's "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay," in *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?*, ed. John Law, 196–223 (London: Routledge, 1986). See Latour, "On Technical Mediation—Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy," *Common Knowledge* 3, no. 2 (1994): 29–64, esp. 32.

27. I have tried to lay out systematically how "translation" is to be thought under these conditions, in "Translation," in *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, vol. 2 (New York: New School for Social Research), http://www.politicalconcepts.org; full version in Hebrew translation, at *Mafte'akh* (University of Tel Aviv), http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en, trans. Liron Mor in "This Untranslatability Which Is Not One," *Paragraph* 38, no. 2 (2015): 174–88; and, most recently, in "Translation," in *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary*, ed. Mercedes Bunz, Birgit M. Kaiser, and Kathrin Thiele (Lüneburg, Germany: Meson Press, 2016). Expanded versions of these essays, along with other chapters making a full genealogical argument, can be found in my *Untranslating Machines: A Genealogy for the Ends of Global Thought* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

28. I say this recognizing that Badiou's own work treads much more carefully here than I can show in this introduction. In particular, his deployment of the series "intuition-undecidability-decision-event" in describing what he refers to as mathematical ontology seems to me to tend away from the uses made of his work by critics following in his line, including Meillassoux and especially Graham Harmon—or at any rate to indicate a spot where his recourse to the languages of theology suggests a more complex account of identity.

29. Charles Dickens, *Bleakhaus*, trans. Gustav Meyrink (Munich: Musarion-Verlag, 1924). Meyrink is consulting Carl Kolb's first translation, in *Boz's (Dickens) Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart: Hoffman, 1855), 55. Kolb's translation merits attention in itself: "Als wir hinuntergingen, fanden wir eine aus einen Trinkbecher mit der Aufschrift

'zum Andenken an den "Tunbridge-Brunnen"' als improvisierte Lampe auf dem Treppenfenster stehen, und ein Mädchen mit einem dicken Gesicht, mit Flanell verbunden (das jeztz durch eine offene Thür mit Mrs. Jellyby's Zimmer in Verbindung stand), anblasen und dabei fast ersticken. Es rauchte dermaßen, daß wir eine halbe Stunde bei offenem Fenster hustend und mit thränenden Augen dasaßen; während welcher Zeit Mrs. Jellyby mit demselben freundlichen Gleichmuthe Briefe über Afrika adressirte" (55).

30. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, trans. Henriette Loreau (Paris: Hachette, 1866), 37.

31. Ibid., 37.

32. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital,* 3rd ed. (Hamburg: Meissner, 1883), 47–48; the English translation is from Moore and Aveling's edition of *Capital*, 41–42. It has not escaped attention that the major transformation of this passage, between the first and second editions of *Kapital*, concerns how Marx expresses himself regarding the *certainty* of judgments about the difference between mere matter and its commodified form. With the second edition, *sinnenklar* steps onto the page, never to leave. It replaces this formulation:

> Als blosser *Gebrauchstwerth* ist sie [eine Waare] ein sinnliches Ding, woran nichts Mysteriöses, ob ich sie nun unter dem Gesichtspunkt betrachte, dass ihre Eigenshaften menschliche Bedurfnisse befriedigen oder dass sie erst als *Produkt* menschlicher Arbeit diese Eigenschaften erhält. *Es liegt absolut nichts räthselhaftes darin* [my emphasis; the English might be something like "There is nothing puzzling about . . ."], daß der Mensch durch seine Thätigkeit die Formen der Naturstoffe in einer ihm nützlichen Weise verändert. Die Form des Holzes z.B. wird verändert, wenn man aus ihm einen Tisch macht. Nichtsdestoweniger bleibt der Tisch Holz, ein ordinäres sinnliches Ding. Aber sobald er als *Waare* auftritt, verwandelt er sich in ein sinnlich übersinnliches Ding. Er steht nicht nur mit seinen Füßen auf dem Boden, sondern er stellt sich allen andren Waaren gegenüber auf den Kopf, und entwickelt aus seinem Holzkopf Grillen, viel wunderlicher, als wenn er aus freien Stücken zu tanzen begänne. (36)

33. Georg Stamatis, "Über einige Goethes Faust entlehnte Marxsche Wendungen," *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung* (1999), Neue Folge 1998, 235–38. See also the discussion of this passage in Helmut Reichelt, "Social Reality as Appearance: Some Notes on Marx's Conception of Reality," in *Human Dignity: Social Autonomy and the Critique of Capitalism,* ed. Werner Bonefeld and Kosmas Psychopedis (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 31. Reichelt, the most vigorous and influential proponent of a highly Hegelian reading of this section of *Capital,* sees here the trace of an earlier engagement with Epicurus, through a passage from Hegel's *Logic.* See his *Zur logischen Struktur des Kapitalbegriffs bei Karl Marx* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag 1970).

1. On the Nature of Marx's Things

1. Karl Marx, *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy,* in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1927). The German is from *Marx-Engels Werke* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968), B. 40, p. 145. Marx reads Lucretius in the 1801 Lepizig edition prepared by H. C. A. Eichstädt, on Gilbert Wakefield and Richard Bentley's London 1796–97 edition.

2. Louis Althusser, *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings, 1978–87*, ed. François Matheron and Oliver Corpet, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (New York: Verso, 2006). I have found most illuminating Vittorio Morfino's *Plural Temporality: Transindividuality and the Aleatory between Spinoza and Althusser* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Morfino takes account of Spinoza's encounter with Lucretius (he is concerned, though, with a slightly later expression of Marx's reading of Lucretius than am I). "[It is] perhaps this primacy of the encounter over form," Morfino writes, "that Spinoza counterposes through Lucretius to the philosophy of substantial form, to the universe hierarchically ordered through those forms" (86). The *event* of the encounter provides Morfino with a remarkable means of describing how different orders of temporality are characteristically articulated nonsystematically (or, better, *related*) in the materialist tradition that he analyzes.

3. The bibliography of works concerning Marx's reading of Lucretius is not short—and the publication of Althusser's essays on the so-called "materialism of the encounter" has served to complicate and considerably deepen the scholarship on the subject. I have in mind, among others, the work of Antonio Negri; in this line, I have found particularly useful a recent essay by Melinda Cooper, "Marx beyond Marx, Marx before Marx: Negri's Lucretian Critique of the Hegelian Marx," in *Reading Negri: Marxism in the Age of Empire*, ed. Pierre Lamarche, Max Rosenkrantz, and David Sherman (Chicago: Open Court, 2011), 127–49. See especially Cooper's remarks on 144:

> Marx's early dissertation and notebooks on Lucretius contain his most eloquent philosophical riposte to the Hegelian philosophy of time. In the Hegelian tradition, time is always mediated by the quantitative measures of space and can therefore only account for the linear fall of atoms in space—it is for this reason, contends Marx, that Hegel is unable to respond to the shock of the *clinamen*, and ultimately refigures it in terms of the dialectic of space and time. In Lucretian philosophy, Marx discovers something that resists the very terms of Hegel's analysis—the *clinamen* introduces a swerve in the fall of atoms, a movement of absolute deviation through which tiome is able to diverge from the mediations of space. The *clinamen* thus allows Marx to refigure resistance in nondialectical terms, as the affirmation of an absolute and prior difference—a difference without possible mediation . . . Marx however (like Negri) is not satisfied with theorizing this purely disruptive notion of resistance. Once we have discovered the *clinamen* as difference without possible mediation, he insists, we need to get *beyond* here to a positive philosophy of time and constitution . . . we need to discover how the *clinamen* itself can become constitutive of its own world.

Cooper, who focuses on the temporal aspects of *declinatio,* is in dialogue here with Francine Markovits, *Marx dans le jardin d'Epicure* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1974), among the most influential works on Marx's reading of Lucretius.

4. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

5. The standard translation of the "Theses on Feuerbach" is by William Lough, in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 13–15. For a searching account of the concept of "species being" that the theses develop, see Étienne Balibar, "From Philosophical Anthropology to Social Ontology and Back: What to Do with Marx's Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach?," *Postmodern Culture* 22, no. 3 (2012), http://www.pomoculture.org/2015/06/10/from-philosophical-anthropology-to-social

-ontology-and-back-what-to-do-with-marxs-sixth-thesis-on-feuerbach-2 (accessed September 23, 2017).

6. "Materialism is the born son of Britain. Even one of his great schoolmen, Duns Scotus, asked himself 'whether matter cannot think.' In performing this wonder, Duns had recourse to God's omnipotence, that is, he made theology itself preach materialism. He was, moreover, Nominalist. Nominalism is one of the main elements of the English materialists, as it is indeed the first expression of materialism in Christian Europe" (Um dies Wunder zu bewerkstelligen, nahm er zu Gottes Allmacht seine Zuflucht, d.h. er zwang die *Theologie* selbst, den *Materialismus zu* predigen. Er war überdem *Nominalist*. Der Nominalismus findet sich als ein Hauptelement bei den *englischen* Materialisten, wie er überhaupt der *erste Ausdruck* des Materialismus ist). "England and Materialist Philosophy," *Labour Monthly* (August 1923): 105–13, "Further Selection from the Literary Remains of Karl Marx," translated and annotated by Max Beer; for the original German, see *Aus dem literarischen nachlass von Marx und Engels*, ed. F. Mehring (Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz, 1902), 2:225–40.

7. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic,* trans. A.V. Miller (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), 369. At the time when Marx is writing, the question of *declinatio* has an additional value, inasmuch as the categorical jump from quantity to quality we find in Hegel also echoes the leap or jump of faith that becomes requisite in the so-called *Spinozastreit*, in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Moses Mendelssohn, and others. The differences with Lucretius are notable; the most important for my purposes is the voluntarist register into which Jacobi translates what in Lucretius, and even in Leibniz, is a condition of matter and of statements regarding matter.

8. Marx, Notebooks *on Epicurean Philosophy,* in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1927), 4:473. For the German, see Marx, Epikureische, 163.

9. Compare from "England and Materialist Philosophy": "Of the qualities inherent in matter the foremost is motion, not only as mechanical and mathematical motion, but more as impulse, vital force, tension, or as Jakob Böhme said, pain of matter. The primitive forms of the latter are living, individualising, inherent, and essential forces, which produce specific variations."

10. Jakob Böhme, as cited in Ludwig Feuerbach's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie von Bacon von Verulam bis Benedict Spinoza* (Ansbach, Germany: C. Brügel, 1833), S. 161. Böhme's work has recently been enlisted in the service of philosophical environmentalism; see, for example, Joel Kovel, "A Materialism Worthy of Nature," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 12, no. 2 (2001): 73–84.

11. Engels underscores Marx's use of Böhme's concept as well. Here is the note he writes to the English edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* of 1892: "'Qual' is a philosophical play upon words. *Qual* literally means torture, a pain which drives to action of some kind; at the same time, the mystic Böhme puts into the German word something of the meaning of the Latin *qualitas*; his 'qual' was the activating principle arising from, and promoting in its turn, the spontaneous development of the thing, relation, or person subject to it, in contradistinction to a pain inflicted from without." *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, trans. Edward Aveling, vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), 95–151.

12. See Carl Schmitt, *Frieden oder Pazifismus?: Arbeiten zum Völkerrecht und zur internationalen Politik 1924–1978*, ed. Günter Maschke (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2005), 934, for comments about Marx's translation of *declinatio* as *ausbeugen*.

13. For Lucretius's use of military analogies in this part of the poem, see Philip De Lacy, "Distant Views: The Imagery of Lucretius 2," in *Oxford Readings in Lucretius*, ed. Monica R. Gale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 148–53.

14. Lucretius, De rerum natura, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2.116–17, pp. 104–5.

15. The edition that Marx uses draws a comparison between this verse and Seneca's *Natural Questions* 5.1.2, "quod ex hoc intellegas licet: cum sol in aliquem clusum locum infusus est, uidemus corpuscula minima in diuersum ferri." Seneca, *Natural Questions*, Books 4–7, trans. Thomas H. Corcoran (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). The difference with Lucretius's verses is striking. For a comprehensive discussion of this section of the poem, see Don Fowler and P. G. Fowler, *Lucretius on Atomic Motion: A Commentary on "De rerum natura" Book II, lines 1–332* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 195.

16. Paul Friedländer, "Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius," *American Journal of Philology* 62, no. 1 (1941): 27–28. For Memmius's role in the poem, see G. B. Townend, "The Fading of Memmius," *Classical Quarterly,* n.s., 28, no. 2 (1978): 267–83.

17. An unimpeachable reading of the Epicurean bases of the sun-mote-*vestigia* system leads H. S. Commager Jr., "Lucretius's Interpretation of the Plague," in Gale, *Oxford Readings in Lucretius*, to conclude that "Lucretius is committed to the discovering of *vestigial notitiai* (2.123) in every imaginable physical phenomenon" (189n). The best account I know of Lucretius's so-called atomology is Brooke Holmes's excellent "Daedala Lingua: Crafted Speech in *De Rerum Natura,*" *American Journal of Philology* 126, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 527–85. Holmes is entirely right "not to concede so readily the subordination of the phonic materiality of the word [in *De rerum natura*] to its power to provoke images and thought" and to seek to show how the "intransigence" the poem demonstrates in "sustain[ing] a sense of synesthesia rather than a sense of coherence" itself has philosophical implications, not to mention implications for what we might call Lucretius's philosophy of language (579–80). I differ with Holmes only on the consequences of this "intransigence," which I take to be associated with a perhaps stronger account of contingency than she does.

18. *De rerum natura*, 2:115–16, pp. 104–5. In his "Repetition in Lucretius," *Phoenix* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1971): 227–36, Wayne Ingalls reviews traditional understandings of the function of repetition in the poem, especially the repetition of words—rather than letters. He argues that lexical repetition in *De rerum natura* flows most proximately and directly from Ennius.

19. Ovid (P. Ovidi Nasonis), *Metamorphoses*, ed. Richard J. Tarrant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.370–71.

20. Here, for instance, are the well-known words in which the *Nicomachean Ethics,* 2.6, 1106b–1107, makes the point. The translation is Ross's:

> Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean [μεσότης], i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that

> principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908).

2. *Capital,* Catastrophe: Marx's "Dynamic Objects"

1. My first epigraph is from Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce,* ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 104. The second is from Paul Valéry*, Regards sur le monde actuel* (Paris: Librairie Stock, 1931), 35.

2. Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," translated by S. W. Ryazanskaya, in Karl Marx *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1970; repr., New York: International Publishers, 1971), 188–217.

3. Francisco Varela*, Principles of Biological Autonomy* (New York: Elsevier, 1979), 54.

4. Karl Marx, "Chapter Six: Results of the Direct Production Process," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 34, trans. Ben Fowkes, 355–466 (New York: International Publishers, 1994), 364, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch01.htm#454 (accesssed August 14, 2017). Further references to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), are cited as *MECW,* followed by volume and page number.

> Sie gilt nur als aliquoter Teil der auf sie fallenden und *ideell* geschätzten Gesamtarbeit. Bei der *Preisbestimmung* der einzelnen Ware erscheint sie als blosser ideeller Teil des Gesamtprodukts, worin sich das Kapital reproduziert. 3) Als solcher,—Träger des Gesamtwerts des Kapitals + Mehrwerts, im Unterschied von der Ware, die uns ursprünglich selbständig erschien,—als *Produkt des Kapitals*—in der Tat als verwandelte Form des sich nun verwertet habenden Kapitals, zeigt sich die *Ware* jetzt in dem *Umfang*, den *Dimensionen* des *Verkaufes*, die stattfinden müssen, damit der alte Kapitalwert und ditto der von ihm erzeugte Mehrwert realisiert werden, was keineswegs damit geschieht, dass die einzelnen Waren oder ein Teil der einzelnen Waren zu ihrem Wert verkauft werden.

Karl Marx, *Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses*, Archiv sozialistischer Literatur 17 (Frankfurt: Neue Kritik, 1968), 96, https://www.marxists.org/deutsch/archiv/marx-engels/1863/resultate/3-produkt.htm (accessed August 14, 2017).

5. There are two important recent works treating, directly or by extension, the "temporalities" of *Capital* (and of capital): Massimiliano Tomba's *Marx's Temporalities* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), and Vittorio Morfino's *Plural Temporality: Transindividuality and the Aleatory between Spinoza and Althusser* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Neither is concerned, as I am here, to address the futurity of *Capital* (and of capital). For Tomba's analysis of the temporalities of use and exchange, see especially 92–158 of *Marx's Temporalities*.

6. *Capital*'s deficit on this point has often been noted, and it has given rise to com-

pensatory works, even to lines of thought, the two most substantial of which flow on one hand from John Hobson's 1902 *Imperialism: A Study,* and on the other from Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* of 1913 and Vladimir Lenin's 1916 anti-Kautskian pamphlet "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." The two lines of thought are in some respects very different. For Hobson, imperialism is, as he memorably puts it, "a depraved choice of national life, imposed by self-seeking interests which appeal to the lusts of quantitative acquisitiveness and of forceful domination surviving in a nation from early centuries of animal struggle for existence." He continues: "[The adoption of imperialism] as a policy implies a deliberate renunciation of that cultivation of the higher inner qualities which for a nation as for an individual constitute the ascendency of reason over brute impulses." J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Nisbet, 1902), 390. Very little of the vocabulary of moral sentiments survives in either Luxemburg's book or Lenin's pamphlet, which describe and attend rather to the structural logic of imperialism, and identify it as the outcome of the tendency of markets to produce unequal accumulations of capital, to eventuate in monopoly and cartel capitalism supported by what we would today call a financial services industry, and to produce *political* effects (for instance, the First World War) that protect or extend cartels and monopolies.

7. Walter Benjamin, "Radau um Kasperl," *Hörspiel für Kinder,* in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 4.2, ed. Tillman Rexroth (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 674–95.

8. "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya, in Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 188–217. Marx goes on to remark on the distinction that political economy draws between "productive consumption" and "consumptive production":

> The economists concede this. They call productive consumption both production that is simultaneously identical with consumption, and consumption which is directly concurrent with production. The identity of production and consumption amounts to Spinoza's proposition: *Determinatio est negatio*. But this definition of productive consumption is only advanced in order to separate consumption that is identical with production from consumption in the proper sense, which is regarded by contrast as the destructive antithesis of production. Let us therefore consider consumption proper. Consumption is simultaneously also production, just as in nature the production of a plant involves the consumption of elemental forces and chemical materials. It is obvious that man produces his own body, e.g., through feeding, one form of consumption. But the same applies to any other kind of consumption which in one way or another contributes to the production of some aspect of man. Hence this is consumptive production. Nevertheless, says political economy, this type of production that is identical with consumption is a second phase arising from the destruction of the first product. In the first type of production the producer assumes an objective aspect, in the second type the objects created by him assume a personal aspect. Hence this consuming production—although it represents a direct unity of production and consumption—is essentially different from production proper. The direct unity, in which production is concurrent with consumption and consumption with production, does not affect their simultaneous duality. Production is thus

> at the same time consumption, and consumption is at the same time production. Each is simultaneously its opposite. But an intermediary movement takes place between the two at the same time. Production leads to consumption, for which it provides the material; consumption without production would have no object. But consumption also leads to production by providing for its products the subject for whom they are products. The product only attains its final consummation in consumption. A railway on which no one travels, which is therefore not used up, not consumed, is potentially but not actually a railway.

9. Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. 13 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961), 621.

10. Karl Marx, *Introduction générale à la critique de l'économie politique*, trans. Maximilien Rubel and Louis Evrard, *Oeuvres,* vol. 1, *Économie* (Paris: Pléiade/Gallimard, 1965).

11. Marx's most explicit consideration of *Identität* is in the context, not surprisingly, of his early encounter with G.W.F. Hegel, in the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right."*

12. My translation, from the unpublished chapter 6 of *Capital,* vol. 1, in *Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses*:

> Da der Wert einer Ware = der in ihr enthaltenen notwendigen Arbeit, so wäre der Wert eines Arbeitstages—der sonst unter den adäquaten Produktionsbedingungen verrichtet wird und mit dem durchschnittlichen, *gewöhnlichen* gesellschaftlichen Mass von Intensivität und Geschick—gleich dem in ihm enthaltenen Tag Arbeit, was Unsinn ist und gar keine Bestimmung abgibt. Der *Wert der Arbeit*—d.h. der Preis der Arbeit (qualitativ) von seinem Geldausdruck entblößt—ist also ein irrationeller Ausdruck und in der Tat bloß eine verwandelte und verkehrte Form für den *Wert des Arbeitsvermögens*. (*Preis*, der nicht auf *Wert* reduzierbar ist, sei es unmittelbar oder durch eine Reihe Mittelglieder, drückt irgend einen bloß zufälligen Austausch von irgend etwas gegen Geld aus. Und so können Dinge, die der Natur der Sache nach keine *Waren* sind und daher in diesem Sinn extra commercium hominum, durch ihren Austausch gegen Geld in Waren verwandelt werden. Daher der Zusammenhang zwischen Venalität und Korruption und Geldverhältnis. Da das Geld die verwandelte Gestalt der Ware ist, sieht man ihm nicht an, wo es herkommt, was in ihm verwandelt ist, Gewissen, Jungfernschaft oder Erdäpfel). (260)

13. Recall Marx's famous assertion in *The Holy Family,* flowing from observations about Duns Scotus, that "Der Nominalismus findet sich als ein Hauptelement bei den englischen Materialisten, wie er überhaupt der erste Ausdruck des Materialismus ist." Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Die heilige Familie* (Frankfurt: Rutten, 1843), 201. The standard translation: "Nominalism, the *first form* of materialism, is chiefly found among the *English* schoolmen," in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 127. For an account of Marx's relation to empiricism, see John Torrance, *Karl Marx's Theory of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. chap. 2, "Marx's theory of knowledge," 29–61.

14. Lucretius, *De rerum natura,* with an English translation by W.H.D. Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2.217–18. The Latin:

> Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus,
> corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur

ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme
incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum,
tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis.
quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum
imbris uti guttae caderent per inane profundum
nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata
principiis; ita nihil umquam natura creasset.

The German, from Titus Lucretius Carus, *Von der Natur der Dinge,* 2nd ed., trans. Karl Ludwig von Knebel (Leipzig: G. J. Göschen, 1831). Von Knebel is consistent in rendering *cadere* by *fallen* (here are the verses, my emphasis):

Noch verlang' ich, mein Memmius, dir zur Erkenntnis zu bringen,
Dass die Körper des Stoffs, da sie senkrecht fallen im Leeren
Durch ihr eignes Gewicht, in nicht zu bestimmenden Zeiten,
Noch am bestimmten Ort von der Bahn abtreiben ein wenig;
Wenig, soviel du nur magst die mindeste Änderung heißen.
Fände dieses nicht statt, so fielen die Körper gerade
Wie die Tropfen des Regens herab, durch Tiefen des Leeren:
Anstoß würde nicht sein, nichts würd' auch treffen zusammen;
Und so hätte Natur nichts bilden können noch schaffen.
Möchte man sagen, vielleicht sind schwere Stoffe vorhanden,
Welche schneller deshalb in gerader Richtung durchs Leere
Fallen, getrieben von oben herab, auf die unteren leichtern,
Also bewirkend den Stoß zur lebenerzeugenden Regung.
Wer dies saget, verfehlet bei weitem die richtigen Gründe:
Denn in der Luft, im Wasser beschleuniget jeglicher Körper
Seinen natürlichen *Fall*, dem Maß nach seines Gewichtes,
Weil die leichtere Luft, das dichtere Wasser nicht können
Jegliches Ding aufhalten auf ein und die nämliche Weise;
Sondern wann schwereres drückt, so müssen sie schneller entweichen.
Aber der leere Raum setzt niemals sich einem der Dinge
Irgend auf eine Weis' entgegen, so dass es den Weg nicht
Nehmen könne dahin, wohin es die eigne Natur treibt.

15. For *dunamis* as the modal Aristotelian "possibility" in Marx, see Michel Vadée, *Marx penseur du possible* (1992; repr., Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998).

16. Peirce tells Lady Welby, in 1904: "I define an Index as a sign determined by its dynamic object by virtue of being in a real relation to it. Such is a Proper Name." Charles Sanders Peirce, "A Letter to Lady Welby," in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vol. 4, ed. Charles Hartshorne (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 335. But he has also said in 1896 (Peirce is notoriously unsystematic), "A sign which denotes a thing by forcing it upon the attention is called an *index*." He continues: "An index does not describe the qualities of its object. An object, in so far as it is denoted by an index, having *thisness*, and distinguishing itself from other things by its continuous identity and forcefulness, but not by any distinguishing characters, may be called a *hecceity*." Charles Sanders Peirce, "The Regenerated Logic," in *Charles Sanders*

Peirce: The Logic of Interdisciplinarity: "The Monist"-Series, ed. Elize Bizanz (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 177.

17. Cf. Marcello Musto, "History, Production and Method in the 1857 'Introduction,'" in *Karl Marx's "Grundrisse": Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Marcello Musto (New York: Routledge, 2008), 12–13.

18. Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi (commonly known as Sismondi) and Thomas Robert Malthus found themselves on one side of the question, Ricardo, Jean Baptiste Say, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon on the other.

19. Karl Marx, *Historiographie du socialisme vrai (contre Karl Grün),* in *Oeuvres,* vol. 1, *Économie,* 702–5. See James Strassmeier, *Karl Grün: The Confrontation with Marx, 1844–1848* (Chicago: Loyola University, 1969). Marx is commenting on these lines from Grün's *Die soziale Bewegung in Frankreich und Belgien* (Darmstadt, Germany: Leste, 1845), 191–92:

> Produkzion und Konsumzion lassen sich in der Theorie und in der äusseren Wirklichkeit zeitlich und räumlich trennen, dem Wesen nach finden sie nur Eins. Ist nicht die Thätigkeit des gewöhnlichsten Gewerbes, z. B. des Brodbachens, eine Produkzion, welche für hundert Andere zur Konsumzion wird, ja, welche es für den Bachenden selbst ist, der ja Korn, Wasser, Milch, Gier, etc. konsumirt? Ist die Konsumzion der Schuhe und Kleider nicht die Produkzion bei Schustern und Schneidern? Man glaubt, der Genuss des Kaffee's, des Zuchers u. s. w. sei blosse Konsumzion: ist dieser Genuss aber nicht Produkzion in den Kolonieen? . . . Produzire Ich nicht, wenn Ich Bröd eese? Ich produzire ungebeuer, ich produzire Wüblen, Bactröge, Badöfen, und folglich Pflüge, Eggen, Dreichflegel, Mühlräder, Schreinerarbeit, Maurerarbeit u.s.w. Konsumire ich nicht, wenn ich produzire? Ebenfalls ungeheurer. . . . Lese ich ein Buch, so konsumire ich zwar zunächst das Produkt ganzer Jahre, wenn ich es für mir behalte oder verderbe, ich konzumire den Stoff und die Thätigkeit der Papierfabrik, der Buchbruderei, des Buchbinders. Produzire ich aber nichts? Ich produzire veilleichts ein neues Buch und dadurch neure Papier, neu Typen, neue Duderschwarze, neue Buchbinderwerkzeuge; lese ich es blos, und lesen es Tausende von Anderen auch, so produziren wir durch unsere Konsumzion eine neue Auflage und dadurch alle jene Materialen, die zur Beschaffung derselben erforderlich sind. Die alles das verfertigen, konsumiren wieder eine Masse Rohmaterial, das aber produzurt sein will und nur durch Konsumzion produzirt werden kann . . . Mit Einem Worte, Thätigkeit und Genuss sind Eins, eine verlehrte Welt hat sie nur auseinander gerissen, hat den Begriff des Werthes, des Preises zwischen beide hineingeschoben, durch diesen Begriff den Menschen mitten auseinander gerissen und mit dem Menschen die Gesellschaft.

Grün, a journalist sometimes known by his nom de plume Ernst von der Haide, is remembered today principally through the work of Marx's biographers; Otto Rühle, for instance, is at pains to detail why Marx fell out with Grün and Moses Hess, in his *Karl Marx: His Life and Work* (1929; repr., London: Routledge, 2013). Grün is associated with Marx in the period before 1848; Marx, who agrees in 1840 with Grün's judgments regarding Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow's early novels (in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx-Engels Werke* [*MEW*] [Berlin: Dietz Verlag/Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, 1956–90], 41:48–49), was acquainted with (and cites) Grün's *Buch der*

Wanderungen: Ostsee und Rhein (Leipzig: Fischer, 1839), published under the pseudonym Ernst von der Haide and "edited" by Grün. Engels has approving things to say about Grün's *Buch der Wanderungen* as well: "In Berlin," he writes to Wilhelm Graeber in November 1839, "lebt ein junger Poet, Karl Grün, von dem ich dieser Tage ein 'Buch der Wanderungen' gelesen habe, welches sehr gut ist. Doch soll er schon 27 Jahre alt sein und dafür könnt' er besser schreiben. Er hat zuweilen sehr treffende Gedanken, aber oft greuliche Hegelsche Floskeln" (*MEW* 41:432). Translation in "Letter to Friedrich Graeber, in Berlin" (*MECW* 2:487).

20. It seems useful to read this obscuring of Marx's early Hegelianism in the English translations alongside the contemporaneous argument we find in Althusser regarding the *coupure,* the break, between the work of a young, Hegelian, humanist Marx, and the mature works—*Capital,* the *Critique of the Gotha Program*.

21. G.W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. B. Baillie (1910; repr., New York: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 90. The German is from G.W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Otto Pöggeler and Dietmar Köhler (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 69. For a careful reading of this famous proposition, see Andrzej Warminski, *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 165–70. An indispensable, more recent analysis is Brady Bowman, *Sinnliche Gewißheit: Zur systematischen Vorgeschichte eines Problems des deutschen Idealismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

22. Antonio Negri, *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons on the "Grundrisse,"* trans. Harry Cleaver, Michael Ryan, and Maurizio Viano (New York: Autonomedia, 1991), 45.

23. Ibid., 45–46.

24. The most important recent framing of Hegel's encounter with Spinoza is found in the essays collected in *Between Hegel and Spinoza,* ed. Hasana Sharp and Jason E. Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

25. Spinoza, "EPISTOLA L., Viro Humanissimo, atque Prudentissimo, JARIG JELLES" (Letter L to Jarig Jelles), in *Spinoza opera*, vol. 4, ed. Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Verlag, 1972), 238–41. For a review of this letter's fate in scholarship regarding German idealism, see Yitzhak Y. Melamed, "'Omnis determinatio est negatio'—Determination, Negation, and Self-Negation in Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel," in *Spinoza and German Idealism,* ed. Eckart Förster and Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175–96.

26. Spinoza, *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza,* vol. 2, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (London: G. Bell, 1883–84), 369. See also the recent translation in *The Collected Works of Spinoza,* vol. 2, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016), 406–7.

27. Pierre Macherey, *Hegel ou Spinoza?* (1979), translated as *Hegel or Spinoza*, trans. Susan M. Ruddick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). Negri's reading of Spinoza's comments regarding determination in *The Savage Anomaly* comes a few years later. Here Negri is interested in showing how in Epistle 50 "Spinoza's thought becomes entirely a theory of surfaces," in which not even unity can be predicated of God (because God is not determinable). Unity as the originary predication nonetheless depends on a thought of the not-one, on a scission. Identity, the argument runs, depends (here the old choice between Hegel and Spinoza appears shaky) upon non-

identity: since God lies above, or is distinct from, the limitation of what-is-not-God, even unity cannot be predicated of him. The fundamental aspect of the passage, Negri claims, is that "'negation' is no longer submitted to privation, that the determination is no longer grasped as an element of a mechanism of metaphysical degradation and/or opposition." Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly,* trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 126–27.

28. Baruch Spinoza, *The Correspondence of Spinoza,* ed. and trans. Abraham Wolf (London: Frank Cass, 1966); Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza: Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), 892.

29. Curley, *Collected Works of Spinoza,* 2:406.

30. Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in his *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature,* trans. Ralph Manheim (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

31. For the *Pantheismusstreit*, see Willi Goetschel's excellent *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004). See also, among many others, *Die Hauptschriften Zum Pantheismusstreit Zwischen Jacobi Und Mendelssohn,* ed. Heinrich Scholz (1916; repr. Charleston, S.C.: Nabu Press, 2010); excerpts translated into English as *The Spinoza Conversations between Lessing and Jacobi*, trans. Gérard Vallée, J. B. Lawson, and C. G. Chapple (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988). More recently, the edited volume *Philosophisch-theologische Streitsachen: Pantheismusstreit, Atheismusstreit, Theismusstreit,* ed. Georg Essen and Christian Danz (Darmstadt, Germany: WBG, 2012), with careful essays on the controversy's shape and background. Omri Boem, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), is a striking account of Kant's response to the *Pantheismusstreit*.

32. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. McPherson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980), 47.

33. "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction," *Anekdota zur neuesten deutschen Philosophie und Publicistik*, Bd. I, 1843; *MEW* 1:13. For a review of the development of the distinction between "immanence and "transcendence" in light of Kant's response to Johann Gottfried Herder's, Jacobi's, and Solomon Maimon's constructions of Spinoza's philosophy, see Beth Lord, *Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze* (New York: Palgrave Macmillam, 2011). For a contrasting position, see Boem, *Kant's Critique of Spinozism*.

34. In their hagiographical 1936 biography, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (London: Routledge, 2015), Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen suggest that

> Engels had met Moses Hess and been strongly influenced by his conception of world history, according to which the Germans were to carry out the philosophical future. In a letter Hess wrote Berthold Auerbach in October 1842, he told him he had been discussing questions of the day with Engels and that Engels had left him a most enthusiastic Communist. In September 1841, Moses Hess wrote a letter to Berthold Auerbach that was a positive panegyric of Marx. "You will be delighted to meet a man who is one of our friends here now, though he lives in Bonn, where he will soon be a lecturer. He is a phenomenon who has made a tremendous impression on me, though my interests lie in an entirely different field. In short, you can definitely look forward to meeting the greatest, perhaps the only real philosopher now living. Soon, when he makes his debut (as a

> writer as well as in an academic chair) he will draw the eyes of all Germany upon himself. Dr. Marx, as my idol is called—he is still a young man (he is at most twenty-four years old)—will give mediaeval religion and philosophy their last push. He combines the most profound philosophical earnestness with the most biting wit. Think of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel fused into one—I say *fused*, not just lumped together—and you have Dr. Marx." (48)

For an overview of the reception of Spinoza's work in this period, see Jay Geller, "Spinoza's Election of the Jews: The Problem of Jewish Persistence," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 12, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 39–63. "The years 1837–38 mark a significant turn in the reception of Spinoza and his 'Testament' with the appearance of Auerbach's translation of Spinoza's works and of his historical novel about Spinoza; perhaps gathering less notice was the publication of *The Holy History of Mankind by a Young Disciple of Spinoza*. The young disciple proved to be 'The Communist Rabbi,' the often forgotten father of both German Socialism and theoretical Zionism, Moses Hess" (43–44). For further information on Hess, see Gérard Bensussan, *Moses Hess, la philosophie, le socialisme (1836–1845)* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1985).

35. "I busy myself very much with literary work; since I received Gutzkow's assurance that my contributions are welcome I have sent him an essay on K. Beck; then I am composing a lot of verses, which, however, badly need polishing up, and also writing prose pieces to practise my style." "Letter to Friedrich Graeber, in Berlin." *MECW* 2:487, December 9, 1839; first published in full in Friedrich Engels, *Schriften der Frühzeit*, ed. Gustav Mayer (Berlin: Sprinker Verlag, 1920). See Peter Demetz, *Marx, Engels, and the Poets* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), and, more recently, Norman Levine, *Divergent Paths: Hegel in Marxism and Engelsism* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2006).

36. Engels, *Mitternachtzeitung für Leser*, nos. 51–54 (March 1840), and nos. 83–87 (May 1840).

37. Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow, *Telegraph für Deutschland,* nos. 26–28 (February 1840).

38. Wolfgang Menzel, *German Literature,* trans. C. C. Felton (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1840), 3:333–35. A thorough account of Menzel's relation to Gutzkow can be found in George Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature,* vol. 6, *Young Germany* (London: Heinemann, 1905), 233ff.

39. Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow, *Uriel Acosta.* In English: *Uriel Acosta,* trans. Henry Spicer (London: Kegan Paul, 1885), 79–80.

40. In *Parsifal*, "die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur, der sie schlug" (Only the spear that struck you [Amfortas] will heal the wound). Slavoj Žižek returns not infrequently to this moment in Wagner, for instance, in *Sublime Object of Ideology* (3), where the phrase is used to designate the fundamental antagonism, possessing an ontological priority, that mediates all other antagonisms in capitalism—which would mean that, because of historical developments, this antagonism, resolved, can solve all others—hence the spear image. This allows Žižek "[to] reinscribe Parsifal in the tradition of radical revolutionary parties," rather than understand Wagner's opera as a precursor of fascism. Slavoj Žižek, "The Politics of Redemption: Why Is Wagner Worth Saving?," *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture* (Fall 2004), http://www.lacan.com/zizred.htm (accessed August

16, 2017). The difficulty here, on my interpretation of the way names work in Marx, is that the antagonism at the core never can be resolved, or not in a way that's predictable or stable, because its "ontological priority" is not established—like the difference between logical and metalogical propositions in Marx, it flickers in a way that is nonsystematic.

41. David Wertheim, *Salvation through Spinoza: A Study of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); *Spinoza au XIXe siècle: actes des journées d'études,* ed. André Tosel, Pierre-François Moreau, and Jean Salem (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2007).

42. Bruno Bauer, *Zur Judenfrage* (Braunschweig, Germany: Otto Verlag, 1843), 9.

43. Benjamin Bary, *Zeitgemässe Gedanken über die Emancipation des Menschen* (Königsberg: Dalkowski, 1843), 116. The full paragraph merits citing: "Warum aber Bauer meint, dass Spinoza kein Jude gewesen sei, ist unbegreiflich. Wir geben ihm seine Behauptung wieder: Luther war kein Christ, und geben ihm sogar einen Grund an, denn der Pabst hatte ihn in dem Bann gethan; Lessing war kein Christ, denn er hatte einen Juden zum Freund; Goethe war kein Christ, denn er sagt: drei Mal eins is eins, das ist der heren Einmaleins; Strauss ist kein Christ, denn ihm wurde sein Umt, weil er ein schlechther Christ sein soll, genommen; und endlich ist herr Bauer selbst kein Christ aus demselben Grunde."

44. Gotthold Salomon, *Bruno Bauer und seine gehaltlose Kritik über die Judenfrage* (Hamburg: Perthes-Besser and Maute, 1843), 38; my translation.

45. Karl Grün, *Die Judenfrage: Gegen Bruno Bauer* (Darmstadt, Germany: Leste Verlag, 1844), 40; my translation.

46. According to Georges Canguilhem, "Man first experiences and experiments with biological activity in his relations of technological adaptation to the milieu. Such technique is heteropoetic, adjusted to the outside, and it takes from the outside its means, or the means to its means." Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life,* trans. Stefanos Geroulanos and Daniela Ginsburg (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 9. Compare to Humberto Maturana Romesín and Francisco J. Varela, *De máquinas y seres vivos: Autopoiesis: La organización de lo vivo* (1973; repr., Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 2006); and *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*, ed. Robert S. Cohen and Marx W. Wartofsky (Boston: Kluwer, 1980).

47. Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. 8 (Lepizig: Oskar Leiner, 1864), 80–81. Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1897), 4:180. I have restored silently my translations of some of Graetz's phrases, omitted in this English edition.

48. Graetz is citing from Juan Antonio Llorente, *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition d'Espagne* (Paris: Ptuttel et Wurtz, 1817), 142: "Les Juifs se servaient entre eux (comme en signe de malédiction) de l'expression hébraique *marranos,* dérivée par corruption, des mots *maran-atha, c'est à dire le Seigneur vient*. Cet usage fut cause que les anciens chrétiens appelèrent par mépris celle classe de nouveaux fidèles la génération des *marrranos,* ou *la race maudite.*"

49. *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia Española, 1734). Covarrubias's definition is from Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611).

3. Necrophilology

1. My epigraphs are from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human,* vol. 2, trans. Paul V. Cohn (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 286; and Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 205–6.

2. Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labor: A Critique of Epistemology*, trans. Martin Sohn-Rethel (London: Macmillan, 1978); first published in German in 1970 as *Geistige und körperliche Arbeit*. Sohn-Rethel's early work has been amply discussed and substantially revised—including by Sohn-Rethel himself, in his 1989 revised edition of *Geistige und körperliche Arbeit* (Weinheim: VCH, 1989). Useful, more recent accounts of the problem of the value-form are Alberto Toscano, "The Open Secret of Real Abstraction," *Rethinking Marxism* 20, no. 2 (2008): 273–87; Geert Reuten and Michael Williams, *Value-Form and the State: The Tendencies of Accumulation and the Determination of Economic Policy in Capitalist Society* (London: Routledge, 1988); Fred Moseley, ed., *Marx's Method in "Capital": A Reexamination* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1993); and, especially, Hans-Georg Backhaus, *Dialektik der Wertform: Untersuchungen zur Marxschen Ökonomiekritik* (Freiburg: Ça ira, 1997).

3. This is how Sohn-Rethel puts it—in terms just slightly different from the ones I am using. He is discussing the way in which the exchange abstraction arises in societies and in individuals. He is characteristically precise—and as a result builds into his analysis a symptomatic hesitation we catch in the story's odd dynamics: the exchange abstraction both develops socially with the gradual consolidation of commodity production, *and* occurs, for the individual consciousness, as the result of external accidents that "befall" consciousness:

> As commodity production develops and becomes the typical form of production, man's imagination grows more and more separate from his actions and becomes increasingly individualised, eventually assuming the dimensions of a private consciousness. . . . The individualised consciousness also is beset by abstractness, but this is not the abstractness of the act of exchange at its source. [T]he abstractness of [the act of exchange] cannot be noted when it happens, since it only happens because the consciousness of its agents is taken up with their business and with the empirical appearance of things which pertains to their use. One could say that the abstractness of their action is beyond realisation by the actors because their very consciousness stands in the way. Were the abstractness to catch their minds their action would cease to be exchange and the abstraction would not arise. Nevertheless the abstractness of exchange *does* enter their minds, but only after the event, when they are faced with the completed result of the circulation of the commodities. (26–27)

4. I have tried to formalize the relation between the economic value-form and the principles of translatability and untranslatability, in Jacques Lezra, "Translation," in *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon* (New York: New School for Social Research), vol. 2, http://www.politicalconcepts.org; full version in Hebrew translation, at *Mafte'akh* (University of Tel Aviv), http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en, trans. Liron Mor; and in "This Untranslatability Which Is Not One," *Paragraph* 38, no. 2 (2015): 174–88.

5. Sacrifice—sacrificiality, the preference for sacrifice, the refusal of sacrifice: these

are the terms in which and through which Jacques Derrida approaches "Bartleby, the Scrivener," in *Donner la mort* (Paris: Transition, 1992), 106ff; *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 76. See, among others, Giselle Berjman, *L'effet Bartleby: Philosophes lecteurs* (Paris: Hermann, 2011), 53–75.

6. For an approach to apostrophe in "Bartleby," see Tom Cohen, "The Letters of the Law: Bartleby as Hypogrammatic Romance (Letters)," in his *Antimimesis from Plato to Hitchcock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 165–69.

7. "Bartleby, the Scrivener," in *Melville's Short Novels*, ed. Dan McCall, 3–34 (New York: Norton, 2002), 33.

8. Giorgio Agamben, "Bartleby, or On Contingency," in *Potentialities,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 243–74; Maurice Blanchot, *L'écriture du désastre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980); Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby; or, The Formula," in *Essays Critical and Clinical,* trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 68–90. For an excellent reading of the story, see Branka Arsić, *Passive Constitutions; or, 7 ½ Times Bartleby* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007).

9. Richard Whately, *Elements of Logic: New Edition* (New York: Sheldon, 1871), 67–68.

10. Ibid., 64.

11. For one account of how the story tends to disaggregate itself, see Kevin McLoughlin, "Transatlantic Connections: 'Paper Language' in Melville," in his *Paperwork: Fiction and Mass Mediacy in the Paper Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 76:

> Bartleby's "paper language" marks the spot where the literary medium of Melville's tale is exposed to a mass mediacy that cannot be integrated into a national literary movement conceptualized in terms of a reflexive self-consciousness. This exposure is dramatized in the tale on the level of the individual subject by the narrator's encounter with Bartleby—or, more precisely—with the disintegrating force that Bartleby supports and that the clerks and in turn the narrator himself come involuntarily to support, as they discover when they display the impression the disarticulating formula has made on them. The impression is disarticulating in that it disintegrates grammatically and syntactically—it is not a self-consistent linguistic unit—and in that it disintegrates the self-consistency of its support—in this case, the self-conscious and self-contained subjectivity of supposedly individual subjects.

12. Herman Melville, *Bartleby, el escribiente*, *Prólogo y traducción de Jorge Luis Borges*, (Buenos Aires: Emecé/Cuadernos de la quimera, 1944).

13. Ibid., 57–58.

14. The principle *vox populi, vox dei* is not uncontroversial. Francis Lieber's *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government,* published in London in the same year that Melville published "Bartleby" in "Putnam's Monthly," in New York, closes a chapter sharply critical of the principle with these words:

> Whatever meaning men may choose, then, to give to *Vox populi vox Dei*, in other spheres, or, if applied to the long tenor of the history of a people, in active politics and

> in the province of practical liberty, it either implies political levity, which is one of the most mordant corrosives of liberty, or else it is a political heresy, as much so as *Vox regis vox Dei* would be. If it be meant to convey the idea that the people can do no wrong, it is as grievous an untruth as would be conveyed by the maxim, the king can do no wrong, if it really were meant to be taken literally . . . Individuality is destroyed, manly character is lost, and the salutary effect of parties is forfeited. He that clings to his conviction is put in ban as unnational, and as an enemy to the people. Then arises a man of personal popularity. He ruins the institutions; he bears down everything before him; yet he receives the popular acclaim, and the voice of the people being the voice of God, it is deemed equally unnational and unpatriotic to oppose him.

Francis Lieber, *Civil Liberty and Self-Government* (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 370–71.

15. On rumor, panics, and markets, consult David Zimmerman, *Panic: Markets, Crises, and Crowds in American Fiction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Zimmerman's focus is a little later than my own. Here is how he describes the logic of markets: "The stock market is constituted and sustained by . . . acts of reading. The market is composed of readers who are intensely aware that other investors are reading the same material at the same time and that their collective interpretations and predictions will have an effect on the market. Because price fluctuations, especially when the market is most volatile and unpredictable, are tied to collective interpretations, investors react to 'what they believe will be the probable effect of facts or rumor on the minds of other traders,' as one early market psychologist put it" (25).

16. First printed in the *New-York Daily Tribune,* June 9, 1853; reprinted in the *New-York Semi-Weekly Tribune,* June 10, 1853; my emphasis. Collected in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works: 1853–1854*, vol. 12 (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 103.

17. For some reports of the possible sources for Melville's dead letter office, see Dan McCall, "The Reliable Narrator," in his *The Silence of Bartleby* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), reprinted in Herman Melville, *Melville's Short Novels*, ed. Dan McCall (New York: Norton, 2002), 277–78.

18. The phrase as I cite it, "When I think over this rumor, I cannot adequately express the emotions which seize me," and as it appears in McCall's edition, comes from the version Melville published in *Putnam's* in December 1853. The version that Melville revised and had printed in *The Piazza Tales* reads instead: "When I think over this rumor, hardly can I express the emotions which seize me" (107).

4. The Primal Scenes of Political Theology

1. Jacques Derrida, "What Is a 'Relevant' Translation?," trans. Lawrence Venuti, *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 197. In French, Jacques Derrida, "Qu'est-ce qu'une traduction 'relevante'?," in *Jacques Derrida,* ed. M. L. Mallet and Ginette Michaud, 561–76 (Paris: L'Herne, 2004), 574. First published in *Quinzième assises de la traduction littéraire* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1999), 21–48.

2. Marc de Launay, "Herrschaft," in *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies,* ed. Barbara Cassin, 549–54 (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

3. Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (1883–84; repr., New York: Dover, 2004), 204–5.

4. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age,* trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 94–101.

5. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty,* trans. Gorge Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5. Important discussions of the "concept" of political theology (the quotation marks are intended to indicate that it remains a matter of controversy whether it *is* a concept, and if so of what sort) may be found in Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue,* trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Jan Assmann, *Politische Theologie zwischen Ägypten und Israel* (Bonn: VG Bild-Kunst), 1992; and, more recently, in Samuel Weber, "Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt," *Diacritics* 22, no. 3/4 (Autumn–Winter 1992): 5–18, esp. 9–10; and Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 144–59. See also the essays collected in Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Žižek, eds., *Theology and the Political: The New Debate* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), and the excellent introductory essay by Michael Hollerich in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology,* ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), esp. 110–20.

6. From *Sigmund Freud and Lou-Andreas Salomé: Letters,* ed. Ernst Pfeiffer, trans. William and Elaine Robson-Scott (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), 75.

7. "The goal Freud's discovery proposes to man was defined by Freud at the height of his thought in these moving terms: *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden."* Jacques Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English,* trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 412–41. Fink returns to the word "instance" in place of the polemical "agency" favored by Alan Sheridan in his translation, *Écrits: A Selection* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 138–69. The original is Jacques Lacan, "L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient," in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966). The essay was first published in *La psychanalyse* 3 (1957): 47–81.

8. Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 61–64. Bettelheim makes the remark concerning the Zuider Zee in the context of an extended and highly inflammatory critique of Strachey's translations in the *Standard Edition*. See Morris N. Eagle, *Recent Developments in Psychoanalysis: A Critical Evaluation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), for the consequences of retranslating Strachey's "reclamation work" as "cultural achievement."

9. Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 22, trans. James Strachey (1932–36), 79–80. I've translated "something like" in place of Strachey's "not unlike" for *etwa wie.* The German is from Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke,* vol. 15, *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* (London: Imago/S. Fischer, 1940), 86.

10. The long history of the incident's role in the creation of the so-called "Black Legend" of Spain's benightedness has been the subject of a number of important studies. Especially helpful for an account of its literary and musical treatments is Andrée Mansau's *Saint-Réal et l'humanisme cosmopolite* (Lille-Paris: Université de Lille III, 1976). A more recent account appears in Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *La France espagnole: Les racines hispaniques de l'absolutisme français* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

11. Posa is traditionally, and not unreasonably, understood as Schiller's proxy in the play, though with important reservations that flow from the character's portrayal by Schiller himself in his "Letters on *Don Carlos.*" Here is how a recent critic has put it: Schiller "[hat] seine literarischen Helden zu Sprachrohren seiner selbst gemacht. In *Don Karlos* ist es Posa, der Schwärmerische Weltbeglücker aus dem Geiste der Aufklärung, der nicht nur scheitert, weil das Jahrhundert (dass 16) für seine Ideen noch nicht reif war, sondern auch, weil er sich in den selbstgesponnen Netzen politischer Taktik verfängt. Sein Versuch, den Freund durch ein Selbstopfer zu retten, mußte dessen Untergang beschleunigen, weil Posa vorbeischaute an der alles beherrschenden Macht der Inquisition, der Freiheitsparolen willkommene Anlässe waren, ihre Macht zu stabilisieren. Am ende des Stücks hat Schiller den Marquis weit von sich abgerückt." Norbert Oellers, "Schiller, der 'Heros': Mit ergänzenden den Bemerkungen zu einigen seiner Dramen-Helden," in *Schiller: National Poet—Poet of Nations: A Birmingham Symposium,* ed. Nicholas Martin (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 70. A more elaborate discussion, including a review of scholarship on Schiller's Posa is André von Gronicka's influential "Friedrich Schiller's Marquis Posa: A Character Study," *Germanic Review* 26 (1951): 196–214, is found in Fabian Elias Gebauer, *Zu Friedrich Schillers "Don Karlos": Genese, Funktion und Problematik des Marquis Posa* (Norderstedt, Germany: GRIN, 2008). I find particularly useful Maria Carolina Foi's observation, in her "Recht, Macht und Legitimation in Schillers Dramen," that Posa's appeal to the king recaptures in dialogue the process of emergence and formation [*Entstiehungsprozess*] of the modern state. In *Friedrich Schiller und der Weg in die Moderne*, ed. Walter Hinderer, Alexander von Bormann, 227–42 (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2006), 229. Hans-Jürgen Schings's *Die Brüder des Marquis Posa: Schiller und der Geheimbund der Illuminaten* (Tübingen, Germany: Niemeyer, 1996) argues for understanding Posa as an Illuminatus, or a forerunner—and makes the point that Schiller's distance from the character (after the first sketches of the play and its first published versions, the so-called "Thalia-fragments") represents Schiller's fear that the Illuminist, even the Enlightenment, critique of Jesuit obscurantism might nonetheless end up relying upon the Order's methods—as Posa seems to do at the play's end.

12. The English translation is taken from *Friedrich Schiller: "Don Carlos,"* trans. Robert D. MacDonald (London: Oberon Books, 1995), 222. Translations of the Grand Inquisitor's "Wo Er war . . ." have varied. Johann Gustav Fischer's translation reads "Where'er he travel'd I was at his side," in *Schiller's Works*, ed. J. G. Fischer (Philadelphia: Barrie, 1883), 90; Charles Passage has "Wherever he might be, there I was also," in *Friedrich von Schiller: "Don Carlos, Infante of Spain,"* trans. Charles E. Passage (New York: Ungar, 1959), 208. The German is from *Friedrich Schiller: Don Karlos, Infant von Spanien: Ein dramatisches Gedicht (Letzte Ausgabe 1805),* ed. Helmut Nobis (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), 224–25 (ll. 5151–65). Nobis notes about these lines: "Mit diesem Äußerungen des Großinquisitors werden die im Drama dargestellten Machtverhältnisse einer neuen Sicht unterworfen und zeitigen Konsequenzen für die Gesamtinterpretation. Die ungeheure Machtfülle der kath. Kirche und ihrer Institutionen schränkt Philips absolutistische Stellung radikal ein, zeigt ihn als Marionette der Inquisition und neutralisiert die von Posa in III:10 entwickelten Ideen und Gedanken über Freiheit und Menschenrechte." Nobis refers his reader here to Niels Werber, "Technologien der Macht," *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 40 (1996): 210–43. The beginning of the scene

is subtly changed from the 1787 version. See Paul Bockmann's edition of the earlier work, *Schillers Don Karlos: Edition der ursprünglichen Fassung und entstehungsgeschichtlicher Kommentar,* ed. Paul Bockmann (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1974), 329–31 (ll. 6792–6816), as well as his commentary on the sources—in Rousseau and Montesquieu—of Posa's earlier, and contrasting, arguments to Philip II (490–507). For a variorum of the initial editions, see *Friedrich Schiller: Dramen II,* ed. Gerhard Kluge, vol. 3 of *Werke und Briefe* (Frankfurt: Bibliothek Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989). Kluge observes that "Ein Auftritt des Großinquisitors gehörte offenbar zu den ältesten Plänen Schillers" (1344), points out that the Inquisitor functions as Posa's opposite, and concludes: "Es gibt in Schillers Werk schwerlich eine Szene oder ein Gestalt, in der der Gegensatz zur Freiheit (sei sie politisch, moralisch oder als Naturrecht des Menschen verstanden) und das Böse samt der Mechanik seines Handelns eindringlicher dargestellt sind."

13. The letters are "Letter from Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein, April 23, 1876," in *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein, 1871–1881*, ed. Walter Boehlich (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 150–56; *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi: 1908–1914*, vol. 1, ed. Eva Brabant, Ernst Falzeder, and Patrizia Giamperi-Deutsch, trans. Peter T. Hofferp (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 408; "Letter from Sigmund Freud to Martha Bernays, March 19, 1886," in *Letters of Sigmund Freud, 1873–1939* (London: Hogarth Press, 1970), 212–14; "Letter from Freud to Fliess, June 12, 1895," in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1986), 131–32; "Letter from Sigmund Freud to C. G. Jung, October 31, 1910," in *The Freud-Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1977), 365–69; "Letter from Arnold Zweig to Sigmund Freud, May 12, 1934," in *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig* (International Psycho-Analytical Library, no. 84), ed. Ernst L. Freud, 76–79 (London: Hogarth Press, 1970). On the general topic of Freud's use of Schiller's work, see Lewis W. Brandt, "Freud and Schiller," *Psychoanalytic Review* 46, no. 4 (1959): 97–101.

14. Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. Alan Tyson, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 6 (London: Hogarth Press, 1991), 99. It seems likely that Freud—who has kings, sovereignty, and different sorts of threats to them very much on his mind, as the reference to *Richard II* suggests—is thinking here of the moment at the scene's close when the princess lets slip that the letter she wants back from Don Carlos was sent to her by the king, his father. "O Himmel!," cries the princess: "Wie schrecklich hab' ich mich verstrickt! . . . Was hab' ich Unbesonnene gewagt!"

15. Hanns Sachs, "Schillers Geisterseher," *Imago* 4, no. 2 (1915): 69–95; and *Imago* 4, no. 3 (1915): 145–79.

16. "—als käm ich heim zu Vater und Schwester": *Lou Andreas-Salomé-Anna Freud: Briefwechsel 1919–1937,* vol. 1, ed. Inge Weber (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2001), 357–59; Theodor Reik, *The Compulsion to Confess,* in *The Compulsion to Confess and the Need for Punishment,* ed. J. Farrar (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1959), 176–356; cf. Reik, *Geständniszwang und Strafbedürfnis: Probleme der Psychoanalyse und der Kriminologie* (Vienna: Internationale Psychoanalytisch Verlag, 1925); *Psychoanalyse und Justiz,* 2nd ed., ed. Alexander Mitscherlich (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), 9–201.

17. Lacan, "Instance of the Letter," 435.

18. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *Harpers' Latin Dictionary: A New Latin Dictionary Founded on the Translation of Freund's Latin-German Lexicon,* ed. E. A. Andrews (New York: Harper, 1879), http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059 (accessed September 24, 2017).

19. Giuseppe Verdi, *Don Carlos: Opera in Four Acts* (New York: Fred Rullman, 1920), 45–50. The translation is mine.

20. The original French of Philip's line, by Joseph Méry and Camille Du Locle, is quite different: "L'orgueil du roi faiblit devant l'orgueil du prêtre." The exceptionally complex textual history of Verdi's opera (the composer produced three versions of different lengths: in French, Italian, and German) is the subject of a number of specialized works, the recent ones heavily indebted to Ursula Günther's "La genèse de *Don Carlos,* opéra en cinq actes de Giuseppe Verdi, représenté pour la première fois à Paris le 11 Mars 1867," *Revue de Musicologie* 58 (1972): 16–64 (part 1), 60 (1974): 87–158 (part 2). Lucio Lugnani's *"Ella giammai m'amò": Invenzione e tradizione di Don Carlos* (Milan: Liguori, 1999) is an intertextual study of Verdi's sources, especially the French libretto for the opera.

Something of a thickener for my own plot is *Don Carlos*'s performance history in the years directly before Freud sets about writing the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. With no fast evidence one way or the other, I imagine Freud aware, at least, of the rumblings that shook the *tout monde* of the Viennese opera establishment, and the musical world about him. In the years from 1926 to 1934 various German and Austrian productions attempted what Grundula Kreuzer has called the "re-Schillerization" of Verdi's opera—various cuts intended to bring the libretto in line with Schiller's original (in her remarkable "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos* and the Modern Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 2 [2006]: 151–79). The most important event in this small, odd history was the Viennese production on May 10, 1932, of *Don Carlos,* in a new adaptation by Franz Werfel. Commissioned by Clemens Kraus for the Vienna Staatsoper, Werfel's adaptation was highly controversial. Kreuzer gives examples of the titles of contemporaneous reviews: "For instances of the debate, see Ernst Decsey, 'Guiseppe [*sic*] Verdi—Franz Werfel—und die Kritik,' *Die Musik* 24/10 (1932), 786–7; Victor Junk, 'Wiener Musik', *Zeitschrift für Musik*, 99 (1932), 600–7; Ferdinand Scherber, 'Franz Werfel als Großinquisitor,' *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, 9 (1932), 526–8; and Franz Werfel, 'Verdis *Don Carlos* und seine Kritiker,' originally *Neues Wiener Journal* (15 May 1932), repr. in idem, *Gesammelte Werke: Zwischen Oben und Unten* (Prosa, Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Literarische Nachträge), ed. Adolf D. Klarmann (Munich, 1975), 351–3" (Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond," 160n37).

21. Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. James Strachey (1932–36), 11:137; the German is from *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago/S. Fischer, 1940), *8*:210–11.

22. Heidegger's essay first appeared in the *Festschrift für Hans Jantzen,* ed. Kurt Bauch (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1951), 7–18. Lacan's translation, "Logos," appeared in *La Psychanalyse* 1 (1956): 59–79.

23. This is how Lacan puts it:

> Que ceci soit le symptôme et le prélude d'une remise en question de la situation de l'homme dans l'étant, telle que l'ont supposée jusqu'à présent tous les postulats de la connaissance, ne vous contentez pas, je vous prie, de cataloguer le fait que je le dise comme un cas d'heideggerianisme,—fût-il préfixé d'un néo, qui n'ajoute rien à ce style de poubelle par où il est d'usage de se dispenser de toute réflexion en un recours au décrochez-moi-ça de ses épaves mentales.
>
> Quand je parle de Heidegger ou plutôt quand je le traduis, je m'efforce à laisser à la parole qu'il profère sa signifiante souveraine.
>
> (This is the symptom of and prelude to a reexamination of man's situation in the midst of beings [*dans l'etant*], as all the postulates of knowledge have heretofore assumed it to be—but please don't be content to classify the fact that I am saying so as a case of Heideggerianism, even prefixed by a "neo-" that adds nothing to the trashy style by which it is common to spare oneself any reflection with the quip, "Separate that out from me from its mental jetsam." When I speak of Heidegger, or rather when I translate him, I strive to preserve the sovereign signifierness of the speech he proffers.) (438)

24. *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci,* vol. 2, comp. and ed. from the original manuscripts, trans. Jean Paul Richter (1888; repr., New York: Dover, 1970), 354. Compare Edward MacCurdy's translation: "Of children who are wrapped in swaddling bands. O cities of the sea, I behold in you your citizens, women as well as men, tightly bound with stout bonds around their arms and legs by folk who will have no understanding of our speech [*sic*]; and you will only be able to give vent to your griefs and sense of loss of liberty by making tearful complaints, and sighs, and lamentation one to another; for those who bind you will not have understanding of your speech nor will you understand them." *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci,* trans. and ed. Edward MacCurdy (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1938), 2:499. MacCurdy's "no understanding of our speech" is provocative, but possibly only a mistake (for "your speech").

25. Leonardo da Vinci, *Carnets,* trans. Louise Servicen (1942; repr, Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 2:400.

26. Leonardo da Vinci, *Scritti Scelti di Leonardo da Vinci,* ed. Anna Maria Brizio (1952; repr., Torno: Unione Tipografica-Editrice, 1966), 333.

27. Annabel Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 320–21.

28. Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci," 63.

29. Freud's essay on Leonardo, he says, does not seek to "'blacken the radiant and drag the sublime into the dust'" (Freud is quoting Schiller), but the analysis is threefold: Freud seeks to understand Leonardo's "enigma"; he seeks to understand the place that Leonardo holds, in part as a result of that "enigma" at the heart of his works, in the imagination of later societies; and he seeks to locate, through his analysis of Leonardo, a limit or a border for psychoanalysis itself: "We are left, then, with these two characteristics of Leonardo, which are inexplicable by the efforts of psycho-analysis: his quite special tendency towards instinctual repressions [*Triebverdrängungen*], and his extraordinary capacity for sublimating the primitive instincts [*Triebe*]. Instincts and their transformations are at the limit [*sind das letzte*] of what is discernible by psycho-analysis. From that point it gives place to biological research" (Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci," 136, 209).

30. "Par méton. *Dès le maillot*, dès la plus tendre enfance (on dit plus couramment '*Dès le berceau*'). Bande ou morceau d'étoffe dans lequel on enveloppait les membres et le torse d'un nouveau-né; lange dans lequel sont enveloppés jusqu'aux aisselles les jambes et le torse d'un nouveau-né. Être dans un maillot, être dans la première enfance."

31. Rand adopts language from Abraham and Torok to describe a mechanism of encryption at work in this essay, by means of which one language discloses what another holds within it. In this case, one might say: that humans are anthropomorphic animals, and that the ties that bind them into citizenship are to be imagined as incommunicable, and violent, to the very extent that they are foundational of the class of "citizens." Nicholas Rand, "The Political Truth of Heidegger's 'Logos': Hiding in Translation," *PMLA* 105, no. 3 (May 1990): 436–47.

32. Lacan, "Instance of the Letter," 435. Compare Sheridan's translation: "The end that Freud's discovery proposes for man was define by him at the apex of his thought in these moving terms: *Wo es war, soll Ich werden*. I must come to the place where that was" (*Écrits,* 171).

5. Adorno and the Humanist Dialectic

1. Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), xviii.

2. Ibid., xviii–xix.

3. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), conv. N2a3, p. 462: "It's not that what is past casts light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past: rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.—Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language." This is the original, from Tiedemann's 1982 edition: "Bild ist dasjenige, worin das Gewesene mit dem Jetzt blitzhaft zu einer Konstellation zusammentritt. Mit anderen Worten: BILD IST DIE DIALEKTIK IM STILLSTAND. Denn während die Beziehung der Gegenwart zur Vergangenheit eine rein zeitliche, kontinuierliche ist, ist die des Gewesnen zum Jetzt dialektisch: IST NICHT VERLAUF SONDERN BILD (,) SPRUNGHAFT. — Nur dialektische Bilder sind ECHTE (d.h. nicht archaische) Bilder und der Ort, an dem man sie antrifft, IST DIE SPRACHE." Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk,* in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982), 5:576–77.

4. Theodor Adorno, "The Curious Realist: On Siegfried Kracauer," in *Notes to Literature,* vol. 2, trans. Sherry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 72. The German essay may be found in Theodor W. Adorno, "Der wunderliche Realist: Über Siegfried Kracauer," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 11, *Noten zur Literatur*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), 388–408.

5. Adorno to Max Horkheimer, August 17, 1941, Horkheimer-Pollock Archive, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt. Cited in Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingston (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 272.

6. Anna Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen* (Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1936); translated into English by Anna Freud as *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (New York: International Universities Press, 1946).

7. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), 322. Said is citing from Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, the group of fragments called "Out of the Firing-Line," dated 1944. I have consulted Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969). Two instructively different English translations of *Minima Moralia* are available. The standard print edition, and the one referred to by Said, is Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1974). A more recent translation is Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. Dennis Redmond (2005), http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/MinimaMoralia.html, accessed August 18, 2017. Throughout (except as marked), references in German are to the Suhrkamp edition, to the English to the Jephcott translation.

8. Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* trans. Jephcott. Redmond's translation of the crucial lines "Die vollständige Verdeckung des Krieges durch Information, Propaganda, Kommentar, die Filmoperateure in den ersten Tanks und der Heldentod von Kriegsberichterstattern, die Maische aus manipuliert-aufgeklärter öffentlicher Meinung und bewußtlosem Handeln, all das ist ein anderer Ausdruck für die verdorrte Erfahrung, das Vakuum zwischen den Menschen und ihrem Verhängnis, in dem das Verhängnis recht eigentlich besteht. Der verdinglichte, erstarrte Abguß der Ereignisse substituiert gleichsam diese selber" is a little different from Jephcott's:

> The total concealment of the war through information, propaganda, commentary, the film crews in the leading tanks and the heroic death of war reporters, the mishmash of manipulated-enlightened public opinion and unconscious action, all this is another expression for desiccated experience, the vacuum between human beings and their doom, in which their doom actually consists. The reified, frozen mold of events, as it were, substitutes for this itself. Human beings are turned into the actors of a monster documentary film, which no longer knows any viewers, because even the very last one has to participate on the silver screen. The genesis of the belabored talk of the "phony war" lay in precisely this moment. It originated to be sure from the Fascist technique of dismissing the real horrors of the war as "mere propaganda," precisely in order to facilitate those horrors. Yet like all tendencies of Fascism, this too has its origin in elements of reality, which ends up prevailing only by virtue of that Fascist attitude, which sneeringly hinted at such. The war really is "phony" [in English (Redman)], but its "phonyness" [in English (Redman)] is more terrifying than any terror, and those who make light of this only contribute that much more to the calamity. Had Hegel's philosophy of history encompassed this epoch, then Hitler's robot-bombs would have taken their place, next to the death-scene of Alexander and similar images, among the empirically selected facts in which the symbolic state of the world-spirit is immediately expressed. Like Fascism itself, the robots are self-steering and yet utterly subjectless. Just like the former, they combine the utmost technical perfection with complete blindness. Just like the former, they sow the deadliest panic and are completely futile.—"I have seen the world-spirit,"

not on horseback but on wings and headless, and this at once refutes Hegel's philosophy of history.

9. Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* 330.

10. Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* trans. Jephcott, 55.

11. Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* trans. Redmond, n.p.

12. Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* trans. Jephcott, 55. Compare Redman's translation at http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/MinimaMoralia.html (accessed August 18, 2017).

13. The isolationist sentiment in the years running up to the attack on Pearl Harbor was strong. On September 14, 1939, Borah delivered a radio address urging Congress to "Retain the Arms Embargo: It Keeps Us Out of War"; on September 15, Charles Lindbergh appealed by radio from Washington, D.C., for "isolation" and called for the United States to "Look to Our Own Defense." On September 19, 1939, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that "Senator William E. Borah today accused Great Britain and France of 'pulling their punches' against Germany on the western front, and asserted that there is something 'phony' about the European war. . . . Borah, who took the cause of the isolationists to the country in a radio speech last week, has received approximately 2800 telegrams." In "Allies 'Pulling Their Punches' on Western Front, Says Borah," *Los Angeles Times,* September 19, 1939, 4. On September 21, 1939, President Roosevelt addressed Congress and requested that the arms embargo, the last element of the so-called Neutrality Law prohibiting full-throated support for England and France, be lifted.

14. "Stanley Excoriates American Critics of British War Effort," *Los Angeles Times,* March 21, 1940, 8. The supposed "phoniness" of the war effort was the subject of an influential 1939 column by Walter Lippmann, which read in part: "It is being said that this is a phony war. But we shall understand the war better if we remember that it was preceded by eight years of phony peace. . . . The phony peace was in fact a war, or more exactly a campaign of aggression, in which the smaller, weaker neutral states were to be captured in order to found great new empires that would then be able to dictate a new order of things throughout the greater part of the world. But at long last this campaign encountered effective resistance, and that resistance is what the superficial are pleased to call a phony war." Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Los Angeles Times,* October 27, 1939, A4. By 1941, memoirs like Robert J. Casey's *I Can't Forget: Personal Experiences of a War Correspondent in France, Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium, Spain and England* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1941), were making the case that, as one reviewer put it, "the 'phony' war was genuine—and nothing was done to bulwark the weak spot [the Maginot line, in this case] through which it would crash in blazing earnest." Benjamin Howden, "Newsman Who Witnessed It Explains French Collapse," *Los Angeles Times,* November 16, 1941, C10.

15. In Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler, a Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947).

16. G.W. F. Hegel, preface to *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971–73), 36; translated by A.V. Miller as *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 18–19. Adorno returns to this passage in *Negative Dialectic;* understanding them perhaps as a description of Adorno's procedure, Hegel's lines seem to me to underlie much of the analysis we find in *Minima Moralia*.

17. Siegfried Kracauer, "Propaganda and the Nazi War Film," collected in *From*

Caligari to Hitler, 274. The subject of Adorno's own relation to film is controversial. A good review of the different positions critics have taken, along with an informed account of Adorno's own efforts to make his way in the Hollywood film industry, and an argument against the picture of the exiled community furnished by Martin Jay in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), may be found in David Jenemann, *Adorno in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

18. The bibliography on film propaganda during the Second World War is extensive. I have consulted, among others, David Culbert, ed., *Film and Propaganda in America: A Documentary History,* vol. 5, *Microfiche Supplement, 1939–1979* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993); the useful anthology edited by Gregory Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: Patriotism, Movies and the Second World War from Ninotchka to Mrs. Miniver* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2000); as well as the more recent work by Luigi Bruti Liberati, *Hollywood contro Hitler: Immagini cinematografiche di una guerra giusta, 1939–1958* (Milano: Lampi di Stampa, 2010); and Jo Fox's *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany: World War II Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 16–92. About *Sieg im Westen* and *Feuertaufe* in particular, see Cooper C. Graham, "*Sieg im Westen* (1941): Interservice and Bureaucratic Propaganda Rivalries in Nazi Germany," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9, no. 1 (1989): 19–44 (especially helpful for its comments on Kracauer's analysis of the film, and for providing a "Closing Report on the Film *Sieg im Westen*" listing the different venues it was shown in, along with remarks from the propaganda office regarding the films' reputed effects there; the report concludes, tellingly: "The last proof of the thorough success of the film is a report dated May 8, 1941 from the Military Attaché in Rio which states: 'In this connection, it is interesting to note a report that the *Nación* sent from New York on May 1, 1941, according to which the 'Antifascist Organization of the Friends of Democracy' asked Secretary of State Cordell Hull by wire to forbid the showing of this film in the USA.' In the interest of German military propaganda, it can only be recommended that a similar film be prepared and finished about the Balkans, Africa, and the Campaign in the East" (44); see also Thomas Sakmyster's excellent article "Nazi Documentaries of Intimidation: *Feldzug in Polen* (1940), *Feuertaufe* (1940) and *Sieg im Westen*," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16, no. 4 (1996): 485–513.

19. Thomas M. Pryor, "Film News and Comment," *New York Times,* May 18, 1941, X3.

20. "Anti-Nazis Picket Uptown Theatre Here as German Propaganda Newsreel Opens," *New York Times,* May 8, 1941. The Ninety-Sixth Street Theatre had a rather checkered history on the whole. As the Yorkville Theatre, it had specialized in foreign-made films. It reopened as the National Theatre in 1936 and after 1940 began showing exclusively German films as the Ninety-Sixth Street Theatre. The theater, which had by this point acquired the unsavory reputation of showing primarily Nazi films, closed when the United States entered the war.

21. Bosley Crowther, "Crime and Crumpets: A Note on English Melodrama—One New Comedy and a Nazi War News Film," *New York Times,* May 11, 1941, X3.

22. George Axelsson, "Airmen Seen Blasting Polish Cities in Film Shown in Berlin and Rome," *New York Times,* April 6, 1940, 3.

23. "A Movie Warning to Neutrals," *Living Age*, June 1940, 360.

24. Joseph C. Hersch, "Awakened by Hobnailed Boots: Broken-Hearted Danes Face Destruction of Livelihood," *Washington Post,* April 21, 1940, 7

25. Bosley Crowther, "'The World at War,' a Powerful Documentary Survey of the Past Decade, at Rialto," *New York Times,* September 4, 1942, 19.

26. The closest Adorno comes to providing a definition of "tendency"—that massively important term in the Marxian tradition—is this late observation, from "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?":

> A dialectical theory of society concerns itself with structural laws, which condition the facts, in which it manifests itself and from which it is modified. By structural laws we mean tendencies, which more or less stringently follow the historical constitution of the total system. The Marxist models for this were the law of value, the law of accumulation, the law of economic crisis. Dialectical theory did not intend to turn structures into ordered schemata, which could be applied to sociological findings as completely, continually and non-contradictorily as possible; nor systemizations, but rather the procedures and data of scientific cognition of the already-organized system of society. Such a theory ought least of all to withhold facts from itself, to twist them around according to a *thema probandum*. Otherwise it would in fact fall right back into dogmatism and would repeat conceptually what the entrenched authorities of the Eastern bloc have already perpetrated through the instrument of Diamat: freezing into place what, according to its own concept, cannot be otherwise thought than as something which moves. The fetishism of the facts corresponds to one of the objective laws. Dialectics, which has had its fill of the painful experience of such hegemony, does not hegemonize in turn, but criticizes this just as much as the appearance, that the individuated and the concrete already determine the course of the world *hic et nunc*. It's very likely that under the spell of the latter the individuated and the concrete do not even exist yet. Through the word pluralism, utopia is suppressed, as if it were already here; it serves as consolation. That is why however dialectical theory, which critically reflects on itself, may not for its part install itself domestic-style in the medium of the generality.

From Theodor Adorno, "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?," opening address to the Sixteenth German Sociological Congress, 1968, trans. Dennis Redmond, 2001, http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/AdornoSozAddr.pdf (accessed August 18, 2017).

27. A searching treatment of this ambivalent relation—in a different vein from my own remarks here—may be found in Miriam B. Hansen's *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011).

28. Theodor Adorno, "The Curious Realist: On Siegfried Kracauer," in his *Notes to Literature,* vol. 2, trans. Sherry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 75.

6. Uncountable Matters

1. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 122; and Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman, eds.,

The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism (Melbourne: re.Press, 2011), 4. The broad attack on what Bryant elsewhere calls "anti-humanist structuralists and post-structuralists" is consistently grounded in the claim that such positions, which "purport to dispense with the subject in favor or various impersonal and anonymous social forces like language and structure that exceed the intentions of individuals . . . still remain in the orbit of an anthropocentric universe insofar as society and culture are human phenomena, and all of being is subordinated to these forces." Levi Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Open Humanities Press, 2011), 19.

2. See Ray Brassier, "Concept and Object," in Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman, *Speculative Turn,* for a strong defense of a metaphysics of objects, against both idealism and a conventional sense of materialism: "Critique eviscerates the object, voiding it of substance and rendering metaphysics weightless. Tipping the scale towards conception, it paves the way for conceptual idealism by depriving epistemology of its metaphysical counterweight. Conceptual idealism emphasizes the normative valence of knowing at the cost of eliding the metaphysical autonomy of the in-itself" (49). The divisions within the field of speculative realism seem to me trivial, though for some considerations from within that field, laying out what appear to be substantive differences, see Graham Harman, "I Am also of the Opinion that Materialism Must Be Destroyed," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010): 772–90

3. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Morton first develops the concept of "hyperobject" in *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

4. Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?," in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy,* trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (1996; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 11–23. The German is from Immanuel Kant, "Was ist Aufklärung?," in *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1999), 20–22.

5. I'm thinking of Étienne Balibar's discussion of what he calls Marx's "strange materialism without matter," in *The Philosophy of Marx,* trans. Chris Turner (1995; repr., London: Verso, 2007), 21–25. For a careful elaboration of Balibar's suggestion, see Alberto Toscano, "Materialism without Matter: Abstraction, Absence and Social Form," *Textual Practice* 28, no. 7 (2014): 1221–40. Toscano argues here for "pulling away" "the materialism of practice of the early Marx . . . from the humanist myth of a transparency of praxis, in the direction of a materialism attentive to the potent immateriality of capital's social forms, in other words, a materialism of real abstractions" (1223).

6. Pablo Neruda, "Oda a las cosas," in *Poesía chilena,* ed. Alfonso Calderón (Santiago: Pehuén, 1988), 45–47; my translation.

7. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

8. Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency,* trans. Ray Brassier (New York: Continuum, 2008). See also his "The Immanence of the World Beyond," in *The Grandeur of Reason*, ed. P. M. Candler and C. Cunningham (London: SCM, 2010); and, for an important brief account of "absolutization," his "Contingence et absolutisation de l'un," http://fr.scribd.com/doc/20861612/Meillas

soux-Contingence-Et-Absolutisation-de-l-Un (site discontinued). For a compact definition of the distinction between "speculative" and "metaphysical" thought, see Meillassoux's "Spectral Dilemma," *Collapse: Philosophical Research and Development* 4 (2008): 261–276, esp. 274–75: "Let us agree to call *speculative* all philosophies which accord to thought the capacity to accede to an absolute, and *metaphysical* all philosophies which ground themselves on a modality of the Principle of Sufficient Reason to accede to the absolute. All metaphysics, according to this reading, cannot but be speculative; however, not all speculation is necessarily fated to be metaphysical."

9. Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 9.

10. John Donne, "The Relic," in *The Songs and Sonnets of John Donne*, ed. Theodore Redpath (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 284.

11. For a definitive treatment of the history of relics in Europe, see Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). More recently, and with regard to the English case, see Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

12. William of Ockham, *Ordinatio,* in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions*, ed. Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh (1973; repr., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

13. Meillassoux, "Contingency and the Absolutization of the One," trans. Benjamin James Lozano, https://speculativeheresy.wordpress.com/2011/03/24/meillassoux-contingency-and-the-absolutization-of-the-one (accessed August 19, 2017). The French is from Meillassoux, "Contingence et absolutisation de l'un."

14. Meillassoux, "Contingency and Absolutization," 20:

> Imagine that an archeologist who's working among the ruins of a universally unknown civilization—for example, about which we're ignorant of whether it had even developed a written language—partially unearths, in the course of her excavations, a tablet on which she finds the following pattern of signs.
>
> For example:
>
> # # # # # # # #
>
> Suppose that her initial response is to assume that this line is a mere frieze, i.e. some sort of aesthetic design engraved on the face of the tablet. However, a moment later she revises her hypothesis, and excitedly asserts that it may well be the penmanship exercises of a schoolboy, repeatedly inscribing the same letter on his notebook (as a young child will do when seeking to master the art of writing). However, upon further excavation of the tablet, she does not find the lines of similar characters—which would have confirmed her second hypothesis about the civilization's development of a written language—but rather a design which convinces her that her first assumption was correct, and that she had in fact been dealing with some kind of aesthetic motif after all. The question that arises here is the following: what shift in understanding occurred in our archeologist when she successively grasped—in one and the same pattern—the decorative motif of a frieze, followed by the recurrent production of the self-same sign?

15. Meillassoux's little fable bears comparison to another story involving a mysterious phenomenon (if it is one) and a scientist who must understand or translate it—

Quine's infamous "Gavagai" story, from Willard V. Quine, *Word and Object* (1960; repr., Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013). (Meillassoux dispenses with the native we find in Quine's story; the void of ethnographic, colonial difference in *Word and Object* becomes the void of historical difference; the radical untranslatability of the phenomenon "pointing-and-saying-*gavagai*" is not the matter at hand but, rather, the indivisibility of the mark the archaeologist discovers.) See also Quine's "On the Reasons for Indeterminacy of Translation," *Journal of Philosophy* 67, no. 6 (1970): 178–83. I've had a bit to say about this story in my "The Animal in Translation," *Postmodern Culture* 24, no. 2 (January 2014), https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v024/24.2.lezra.html (accessed August 19, 2017).

16. For a recent overview of accounts of fetishism, see Christopher M. Gemerchak, ed., *Everyday Extraordinary: Encountering Fetishism with Marx, Freud and Lacan* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2004). See in particular William Pietz, "Fetishism and Materiality: The Limits of Theory in Marx," in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. E. S. Apter and W. Pietz (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993). See also Pietz's definitive three articles on the topic, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *Res* 9 (1985): 5–17; "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish," *Res* 13 (1987): 23–45; and "The Problem of the Fetish, III: Bosman's Guinea and the Enlightenment Theory of Fetishism," *Res* 16 (1988): 105–23. For an early, important treatment of the problem of the fetish standing at the intersection of psychoanalysis and Marxism, see Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Unversity Press, 1990). For the literary-historical articulation of the matter, see Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

17. Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21 (1927–31), *The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents, and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961), 147–58. The German is from "Fetischismus," *Almanach der Psychoanalyse 1928* (Vienna 1927), 17–24.

18. Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre IV: La relation d'objet et les structures freudiennes, 1956–1957*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1994).

19. In Lacan's case and in Meillassoux's, matters are considerably more complicated than this, of course. Meillassoux claims, to strong effect and persuasively, that correlationism is dependent on the principle of non-contradiction (PNC); he is less persuasive, to my mind, in claiming to avoid PNC himself. Whether that makes him a correlationist or not depends on whether we think that relying upon the PNC is sufficient grounds for being called a correlationist.

20. *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig 1854–1961), http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB (accessed August 19, 2017).

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